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Chairman: U Mya Than ..... (Myanmar)

In the absence of the Chairman, Mr. Mesdoua (Algeria), Vice-Chairman, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 3.05 p.m.

Agenda items 65 to 81 (*continued*)

General debate on all disarmament and international security items

Mr. Ingólfsson (Iceland): Allow me to congratulate the Chairman on his appointment to chair this Committee. I pay tribute also to the members of the Bureau and assure them of the full support and cooperation of my delegation.

The outcome of the 2000 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) clearly marks the high point in terms of developments this year as regards the multilateral disarmament agenda. The unequivocal undertaking by the nuclear-weapon States to accomplish the total elimination of their nuclear weapons is indeed significant and provides an important reference point in the field of nuclear disarmament. The conclusions of the Conference undoubtedly strengthen the NPT regime. The agreement on practical steps towards nuclear disarmament defines a common framework for the way ahead and will, hopefully, contribute to the achievement of tangible results. Universal adherence to the NPT and full compliance with its provisions remain fundamental to prevent the proliferation of nuclear weapons.

The Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) is a central building block in the global order aimed at halting the proliferation of, and reducing reliance on, nuclear weapons. We welcome the decision by the Duma of the Russian Federation to ratify the CTBT. We urge those States that have not signed the Treaty to do so. We also call upon those States that have not yet ratified it to do so, especially those whose ratification is required for its entry into force.

The bilateral nuclear negotiations between the United States and the Russian Federation are central to the non-proliferation effort and constitute the backbone of the nuclear disarmament effort. We welcome the ratification of START II by the Russian Federation in April this year. The Treaty is an important and integral part of a disarmament process which, hopefully, with START III, will include further deep reductions in the nuclear arsenals of both sides.

The Anti-Ballistic Missile (ABM) Treaty remains a cornerstone of strategic stability. We welcome the reaffirmation to that effect by the United States and the Russian Federation and, more generally, the widely shared recognition of the need to preserve the Treaty.

The international community has for long recognized the potential value of a treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons — the fissile material cut-off treaty. That was reiterated by the NPT Review Conference. We call upon the

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Conference on Disarmament to commence negotiations on a fissile material cut-off treaty at an early date with a view to concluding a treaty within five years.

Concern about biological weapons has increased since the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention entered into force 25 years ago. The reasons are known and well justified. They provide the background for the almost six years of effort to negotiate an effective verification mechanism to reinforce the Convention. The deadline next year specified in the mandate of the Ad Hoc Group on a verification protocol is rapidly approaching. Failure to complete the protocol would send the wrong signal to those who might be contemplating the acquisition of biological weapons. There is clearly a need for a mechanism that can provide for transparency in this important area.

We share the view that the issue of small arms and light weapons is highly important, and are therefore pleased to note that it is now being addressed in earnest. The problems caused by the proliferation of these arms pose a common challenge, given the grave suffering that they cause in many parts of the world. The decision to hold next year the United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects is a step in the right direction. We share the opinion expressed by the Secretary-General in his Millennium Report that civil society and non-governmental organizations should be invited to participate fully.

The Ottawa process and mine-ban Convention, two and a half years after entering into force, is showing tangible results which are reflected in the production of fewer anti-personnel mines; an almost complete end to exports; reduced use of those mines; an increase in the destruction of stockpiled mines; a decrease in the number of victims; and increased demining of land. These clearly are impressive early results of a process which is highly significant, especially in terms of its humanitarian impact. We support the continuing efforts to move this process forward and to achieve full universalization of membership of the Convention.

It is our hope that the atmosphere prevailing here in the aftermath of the successful NPT Review Conference, and the reinforced commitment by our heads of State and Government at the Millennium Summit, will mark the beginning of a new millennium, providing for fruitful work at the Conference on Disarmament and productive contributions by the General Assembly towards our common goal of achieving peace and security.

Mr. Chkheidze (Georgia) *(spoke in Russian)*: Allow me at the outset to congratulate the Chairman on his assumption of the leadership of the First Committee and assure him of our appreciation of his efforts to deal with the complex agenda before us.

I should like to begin with a quotation from General Assembly resolution 53/25, "International Decade for a Culture of Peace and Non-Violence for the Children of the World (2001-2010)", unanimously adopted at the fifty-third session, which emphasized in its eighth preambular paragraph that

> "the promotion of a culture of peace and non-violence, by which children learn to live together in peace and harmony that will contribute to the strengthening of international peace and cooperation, should emanate from adults and be instilled in children".

I hope that the Secretary-General will submit the appropriate programme of action to promote the implementation of the Decade pursuant to the resolution. However, these efforts are not worth making if substantial progress is not achieved in the process of global disarmament — that is, if adults cannot arrive at agreement on all key issues.

Georgia is a small country, whose history has been marked by destruction, wars and manifold difficulties throughout the centuries. Hence Georgia knows the value of peace, and very much appreciates the significant progress achieved in the process of disarmament and international security in the last four to five years. The signing of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT), the entry into force of the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) and the steady progress achieved in elaborating the verification protocol to the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC) are solid examples of our successful efforts. We are pleased to note that the sixth Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) followed suit and consolidated common ground for tackling problems still outstanding.

The world, exhausted by the nuclear threat, was relieved by the ratification of START II, as well as by the signing by the United States and the Russian

Federation of the agreement on the management and disposition of plutonium no longer required for defence purposes.

We further welcome the understanding between the two parties on the core issue of strategic stability — the Anti-Ballistic Missile (ABM) Treaty — as expressed in the Joint Statement by the Presidents of the United States of America and the Russian Federation of 4 June 1999.

We are confident that this progress is an outgrowth of rapprochement and confidence-building between the nuclear-weapon States, permanent members of the Security Council. The joint statement issued by the permanent members on Mongolia's non-nuclear status is a striking manifestation of this kind of cooperation. These are most encouraging examples of how we can contribute to the future of the "Children of the world".

Like all other participants in this session, we cannot go so far as to believe that the nuclear threat is finally behind us. Much has yet to be done to make our dreams come true. First and foremost, it is incumbent upon the nuclear Powers to make joint efforts to make that dream come true and ensure a peaceful future for the "Children of the world".

Regrettably, some of the most powerful disarmament instruments — the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty and the Conventions on chemical and biological weapons — have still not become universal. The political will of States, as demonstrated by developments on halting the process of producing fissile materials, is not sufficient. Tensions over the problems related to the ABM Treaty remain, while other issues have become the focus for long debates in the Committee. Members have found themselves forced over and over again to vote on the same draft resolutions.

It is with deep concern for our children's future that we note that the world continues to suffer from a host of inter-State and intra-State conflicts. According to United Nations data, nearly 25 million people — refugees and forcibly displaced persons — are seeking asylum or are left stateless. Suffice it to say that the civilian population, in particular women and children, account for more than 80 per cent of the victims of armed conflict. Moreover, hundreds of thousands of children under the age of 16 are combatants involved in fighting. In the past decade the death toll of victims of conflict has risen to 5 million.

It would seem obvious that armed conflicts are fuelled by the inflow of small arms, but we have failed to establish an effective mechanism to curb their proliferation. It is noteworthy that the number of people killed annually by small arms and light weapons far exceeds the number of those who died as a result of the atomic bombardment of Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

At this point I should like to recall the pledge in the Millennium Declaration

> "To take concerted action to end illicit traffic in small arms and light weapons". (*A/RES/55/2, para. 9*)

We hope that this commitment will be followed by concrete efforts aimed at its realization. In the same vein, we hope that the conference to deal with this matter, called for 2001, will yield positive results, all the more so since it is based on our common responsibility for the "Children of the world".

It is quite difficult to give a full list of all the small arms conferences and meetings held under the aegis of the United Nations in the past year, or within the framework of regional organizations or institutions, as well as all the publications on the issue in the same period. We must benefit from the recommendations and experience gained through this process to attain the chief goal set for the conference in 2001, which is to elaborate a final document that is not merely declaratory, but will open up new avenues to fight the smuggling of small arms.

We have to agree with the conclusion of the Advisory Board on Disarmament Matters, as set out in document A/55/349, which stresses the need to create international norms, such as criteria to govern the transfer and receipt of small arms. It will be no easy task, however, to distinguish between licit and illicit trading in small arms, bearing in mind the right of self-defence enshrined in the United Nations Charter. At the same time, there must be no doubt about the need to assess the weight of arguments advanced by States that have decided to expand their stockpiles of conventional arms, for whatever reason. Therefore, it is of the highest priority to ensure transparency in arms dealings; effectiveness of the Register of Conventional Arms with regard to small arms; expansion of its

scope; and the provision of additional information on military holdings.

Georgia has been confronting acute problems since the collapse of the Soviet Union. Abkhazia, the western province of Georgia, still remains under the control of separatist forces, which violently obstruct the efforts of the international community to peacefully resolve the conflict. Although the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe (CFE) provides for control of the levels of conventional arms, there are no means to verify the amount of weaponry possessed by the illegal, de facto government of the region. Such zones, commonly called "white spots", create the most fertile environment for all kinds of arms smuggling and criminal activity by a variety of groups. The connection between arms and drugs smuggling and terrorism is self-evident in this case. Given such circumstances, these "white spots" nurture other conflicts or sow instability beyond the conflict zone.

In such an environment the problem of small arms does not exist in isolation. In fact, the lack of control over the laying of anti-personnel mines in the region has considerably increased the number of victims among the local civilian population.

Furthermore, the illegal possession of small arms by civilians has become a normal part of daily life in Abkhazia. In many instances, the arms are used not only for self-defence, but to provide a livelihood by the abduction of people for ransom and outright robbery. In this situation of lawlessness incidents have become widespread throughout Abkhazia. Traditional programmes, such as weapons for development or weapons for goods, simply do not apply there. Indeed, each programme has to be tailored to fit the realities of a given region, although using market incentives would seem to be debatable in this case. There are no grounds for neglecting the possibility of exchanging weapons for goods or social infrastructure, however, as articles such as sewing machines, bicycles or construction materials could prove useful to allow for a life in peace.

Only the establishment of a stable peace using all means — ranging from preventive diplomacy to fostering economic development, and resorting if necessary to enforcement measures, again in the best interests of the "Children of the world" — will provide the solid foundation needed to overcome the negative consequences of illegal arms proliferation and accumulation.

The situation that has emerged in the world, and in particular in Abkhazia, calls for the problem to be addressed at the grass-roots level — establishing the sources and routes of the illegal arms traffic and pinpointing the individuals responsible, particularly in Abkhazia. That would be completely in line with the efforts of the international community to quell conflicts.

Transparency is needed not only with regard to information on arms stockpiles, but also with regard to the ways and means used to smuggle arms. This information should be brought to the attention of the international community. It is necessary, therefore, to establish a system to effectively monitor and detect the sources of this evil. It is common knowledge that arms transferred from existing stockpiles constitute a major part of those illegally possessed.

Georgia, together with neighbouring States of the Caucasus, Europe and Asia, is engaged in the process of implementing projects related to the transit of oil and gas via pipelines. The prospects for these projects are very promising, as they have enormous potential for the economic development of adjacent regions as well. Accordingly, the system of control of the proliferation of arms in the region must be attuned to the new requirements. In this context, we are in great need of assistance to strengthen our border-guard and customs services in Georgia. The issue of assistance to States in this matter merits thorough consideration.

Georgia is confident that only by concerted action will we make substantial progress towards realizing the goals to which we committed ourselves by adopting the historic Millennium Declaration.

Mr. Dragonov (Bulgaria): On 5 October I had the honour, in my capacity as President of the Conference on Disarmament, to present to the Committee the report (A/55/27) of the Conference on its 2000 session. Today it is my duty and privilege to speak to draft resolution A/C.1/55/L.5, on the report of the Conference.

Very much in the spirit of the report itself, the draft resolution is straightforward and to the point. The text refers to the importance of the unique multilateral forum for negotiations on disarmament and asserts the urgent need for the Conference to fulfil that role and

make progress on substance. It welcomes the strong collective interest of the Conference in commencing substantive work as soon as possible during the 2001 session.

The draft resolution also welcomes the Conference's decision, expressed in paragraph 35 of the report, to request the current and incoming Presidents to conduct joint consultations during the inter-sessional period in order to try to achieve this goal.

Under the draft resolution the General Assembly would further encourage the Conference on Disarmament to continue the ongoing review of its membership, agenda and methods of work.

In concluding, I should like to express the hope that, as with similar draft resolutions in previous years, this draft resolution will be adopted without a vote.

Mr. Calovski (The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia): I congratulate the Chairman on his election. I am sure that under his able chairmanship the Committee will complete its work successfully. In his important endeavour he will have the full support of our delegation. I also congratulate the other members of the Bureau on their election to their high posts.

The Committee is well prepared to have useful discussions of practically all aspects of disarmament and some important issues of the maintenance of international peace and security related to disarmament and arms control. The introductory statement of Mr. Dhanapala, Under-Secretary-General for Disarmament Affairs, and the documents prepared by the Secretariat will help the Committee, as expected, to work in a result-oriented manner. I am very pleased to see in our midst Mr. Vladimir Petrovsky, Director-General of the United Nations Office at Geneva and Secretary-General of the Conference on Disarmament, whose guidance has always been very helpful to the Committee.

Nevertheless, it is difficult to predict to what extent the Committee will succeed in moving the disarmament agenda forward, because of the present stagnation. It is essential to make every effort to that end. Our delegation will do its part.

In our view, the Committee's priority concern at this session should be implementation, in an interlinked manner, of the commitments made in the Millennium Declaration of September this year and of the results of the 2000 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). One of the main reasons for the present unsatisfactory development of the disarmament and arms control process is that the process has not truly managed to develop its potential parallel with the international agenda for the maintenance of international peace and security, and for development as a whole. If this trend continues, we cannot realistically expect much better results this year or next year. The present lack of political will and readiness to move the disarmament process forward should be addressed, of course, in an appropriate and organized manner. If we do not obtain satisfactory results in the prevention and resolution of conflicts, in the elimination of poverty, in stabilization and development efforts, in regional and global integration, and so on, it is difficult to expect much progress in the disarmament and arms control effort.

The present globalization of international life implies the speedy abandonment of stereotypes, both in substance and form. Even the best disarmament experts cannot move the process forward if their colleagues dealing with international security do not view their own efforts in the same way. We believe that disarmament and arms control efforts can help to make a reality of the determination of the heads of State and Government, expressed in the Millennium Declaration, to establish a just and lasting peace throughout the world in accordance with the objectives and principles of the Charter. The Republic of Macedonia considers such efforts to be of crucial importance for the maintenance of international peace and security.

The Secretary-General, in his latest report (A/55/1) on the work of the Organization, has reminded us once again that disarmament continues to be a critical element of the United Nations strategy for peace and security, stressing steps to reduce the level of arms and curb proliferation, not only to make the world a safer place by reducing the propensity for conflict, but also to lessen the temptation for States to embark on costly arms races. We share that conclusion. The Secretary-General's warning that global military expenditures in 1999 increased for the first time in the post-cold-war period, reaching almost $780 billion, should be taken most seriously by all Member States and addressed as such.

The twenty-first century should be a century of cooperation, not of confrontation; of integration, not of

coexistence; of security and development, not of conflict and poverty. But that does not mean that the forces of progress will automatically be successful; success will come as a result of our efforts. The United Nations, as the global Organization for peace and international cooperation, should lead this change for the better. If the First Committee moves disarmament and arms control forward, it will make a huge contribution to this paramount endeavour of our Organization.

The situation in South-Eastern Europe is changing for the better. Recent developments in the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia are a very good illustration. For some time the region was the main security problem of Europe, with global implications. In the past we witnessed numerous negative developments. Because of that, the stagnation of the region reached unacceptable proportions. All the countries of the region experienced negative effects. But now there is a feeling that things could develop for the better and that the integration of the region within the Euro-Atlantic structure will go faster in all areas.

From the point of view of disarmament and arms control, however, the situation in the region will continue to be of concern for some time, simply because there are too many conventional weapons, too many small arms and light weapons, too many landmines to be demined, and so on. The region cannot sustain the present high level of military forces. Its integration into the Euro-Atlantic structures will require that all these aspects of disarmament and arms control in the region be addressed speedily and in an organized manner. The First Committee could influence developments in that direction. Speedy disarmament and demilitarization of the region, particularly concrete and practical measures to stop the illegal possession of, and trafficking in, small arms, should be seen as urgent. Demining should be speeded up as much as possible. In this respect, the speedy integration of the region into the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) is of paramount importance.

The unequivocal commitment of the nuclear-weapon States to accomplish the total elimination of their nuclear arsenals, to halt the spread of nuclear weapons, and to strengthen the standards governing the peaceful use of nuclear energy, made at the 2000 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), is in our view the most important result of the disarmament effort this year. Other positive results of the Conference are also very important. There is no reason, to judge by the point of view expressed in the Millennium Declaration, why this trend should not continue. Of course, the most important task of the international community at present is to convince Member States of the United Nations that are not members of the NPT regime to change their position and accede to the Treaty. All serious analysis has concluded that they will benefit from being parties to the Treaty and, even more important, that that will be the most important step towards overcoming the present security difficulties in the Middle East, South Asia and the Far East, and a blow to aspirations to become nuclear. In our view, acceding to the NPT is the best way to eliminate the nuclear danger and to strengthen international security.

We note that the number of parties to the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) has increased. It is very important that the Russian Federation has ratified the CTBT. The United States and other key States are expected to ratify the Treaty as well. International efforts to bring the CTBT into force as soon as possible continue to be a priority of many delegations, including my own. Nuclear armaments need no more modernization or improvement.

In the coming period, in our view, the international community should give absolute priority to the start of negotiations on the early conclusion of a universal and verifiable fissile material cut-off treaty. There is no political rationale for not doing so or for the present hesitation and inability of the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva to reach agreement on its programme of work.

Relations between the United States and the Russian Federation with regard to disarmament continue to be of the highest importance. The entry into force of START II, the commencement of negotiations on START III, and the functioning of the Anti-Ballistic Missile (ABM) Treaty of 1972 remain the most important priority of the nuclear disarmament process. We have noted the positive statements of the Russian and United States delegations in the Committee in this regard.

In the past five years the problem of missiles and missile technology has become a matter of serious concern. It is clear that the proliferation of missiles and missile technology for weapons of mass destruction,

including nuclear weapons, has acquired such dimensions that it must be addressed. Taking effective measures to curb the proliferation of missiles for weapons of mass destruction would therefore be a welcome development.

We have always considered the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones to be a positive factor in the strengthening of international relations and the maintenance of international peace and security. We are pleased that the Disarmament Commission has adopted principles and guidelines for establishing nuclear-weapon-free zones. The most important, of course, is the principle that nuclear-weapon-free zones should be established on the basis of arrangements freely arrived at among the States of the region concerned. We have welcomed all established zones, and we recognize the uniqueness of the Mongolia case. We appreciate the statement of the Government of Mongolia in this respect.

I should like to end this part of my statement by stressing that sustainable economic development and the elimination of poverty are the a key to better international relations and progress. The attainment of that goal needs no nuclear option. Abandoning the nuclear-weapon option and becoming a non-nuclear State can be extremely beneficial, as illustrated by Ukraine, Belarus and Kazakhstan.

We remain preoccupied with the negative aspects of other weapons of mass destruction, and we support all efforts for their total banning and elimination. We are in favour of full implementation of the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC), and support reinforcement of the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention (BWC). We note the candidacy of Geneva and the wish of the Government of Switzerland that the headquarters of the future biological weapons organization be in Geneva.

The Republic of Macedonia has welcomed the decision of the General Assembly to convene the United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects in June/July 2001. In the area of conventional weapons this undertaking has already acquired a deserved priority. Our task is to ensure that the Conference succeeds. We appreciate very much the offer of the Government of Switzerland to host the Conference. Preparations for it are going forward well, particularly in the Preparatory Committee. There are many good proposals. Of particular interest is the Swiss-French proposal to adopt a legal instrument on the marking, recording and tracing of small arms. The Conference will no doubt address many political, economic, social, security and other issues related to small arms and light weapons. It will be a very important event next year. We hope that its result will be to curb the present trafficking in these weapons and to strengthen international cooperation in dealing with the problem. For our region of South-Eastern Europe it is particularly important that the Conference should succeed and that we start to make progress in eliminating the huge quantity of small arms and light weapons illegally possessed and in stopping the illegal trafficking in them.

The Republic of Macedonia is very supportive of all efforts aimed at banning anti-personnel mines and of demining activities. We welcome the information that the production of and trade in mines has substantially dropped, and that as a result of demining fewer mine victims are being recorded. We must continue to support the Ottawa process. It is of particular importance for some countries of South-Eastern Europe. Promotion of the universalization of the mine-ban Convention is very important from a political and humanitarian point of view. In this respect, we note the role and contribution of Canada, Switzerland and Mozambique.

Many previous speakers have expressed their views on the work of the Conference on Disarmament. They noted with concern that the Conference, in spite of numerous discussions and efforts, has not agreed on its programme of work. The answers that we have heard so far to the question "Why?" differ. Our view is that the Conference on Disarmament will continue to struggle, and it is doubtful whether it will be able to start to function in the way in which the majority of Member States of the United Nations would like it to function. I will mention two reasons.

First, the arrangement of the work of the Conference is outdated. The present arrangement was suitable for the period of the cold war and coexistence, but it is not suitable for the present period of cooperation, integration and globalization. It is imperative that the Conference reform itself and change its method of work. It should stop working in numerous bodies and groups. It should conduct its business only in meetings of all members.

The second reason is the non-universality of the Conference. It is unacceptable that some Member States of the United Nations can be members of the Conference while others cannot. It is also unacceptable that member States of the Conference are entitled to decide whether a sovereign Member State of the United Nations can be a member of the Conference. It is not acceptable that a member State of the Conference can prevent a Member of the United Nations from becoming a member of the Conference. The Conference was not established to be an exclusive club of some Member States of the United Nations.

Some delegations stress that the main reason for the present unsatisfactory situation is the lack of political will to overcome it. Some say that the opposing positions of the nuclear and non-nuclear States is the main reason for the crisis of the Conference, in spite of the fact that the CTBT was negotiated there. There is probably truth in all this, but, whatever the reason, we must face the fact that the fundamental problem of the Conference crisis lies within itself and not outside. It is an outdated disarmament mechanism which needs serious reform. The sooner we face that fact openly, the better for the Conference on Disarmament.

Before I conclude, I should like to inform the Committee that my delegation, together with others, will submit an omnibus draft resolution (A/C.1/55/L.47) on the following agenda items: item 66, "Development of good-neighbourly relations among Balkan States", and, under item 67, "Maintenance of international security", sub-items (a), "Prevention of the violent disintegration of States", and (b), "Stability and development of South-Eastern Europe". The draft resolution is entitled "Maintenance of international security — good-neighbourliness, stability and development of South-Eastern Europe". We are collecting suggestions for the improvement of the text and will submit it to the Committee in due time. Our intention is that the draft resolution be adopted without a vote. We will be very pleased to receive suggestions in that direction. We are also taking care to see that the draft resolution does not have financial implications.

When I introduce the draft resolution I will say more about its message, substance and relevance, particularly at the present stage of developments in our region. For some time we have been endeavouring to promote a culture of good-neighbourly relations, so much needed in our region as well as in some other regions of the world. One of the most important parts of that effort is the disarmament, stability and development effort in the region. There have been four wars, and there are many conventional arms, small arms and light weapons and landmines. It is true that the region is out of the crisis period, but much remains to be done. We are optimistic, however. That is why the draft resolution is future-oriented. I hope that the Committee will support it. For the region to go forward, it is essential that its Europeanization be supported by all in a concrete and visible manner. Central to that effort is the implementation of the Stability Pact for South-Eastern Europe.

Mr. Al-Malki (Bahrain) (*spoke in Arabic*): Allow me at the outset to express to the Chairman, on behalf of my delegation, our most sincere congratulations on his unanimous election. We are fully confident that his skill and diplomatic ability will be conducive to the successful conduct of the Committee's work, with the cooperation of the other members of the Bureau, whom we wish success. I cannot fail here to convey to his predecessor, Ambassador Raimundo González, our thanks and appreciation for steering the work of the previous session most wisely.

Despite the end of the cold war a decade ago, the issue of disarmament and non-proliferation, especially of nuclear weapons, has been a source of disquiet for the human race because of its dangers and implications. Such weapons threaten the security and peace of human life on this planet. States are still divided between those that possess and manufacture such weapons, and are able to develop them, and States that aspire to possess them.

The interest of the international community has been focused on the gravity of such weapons. World leaders have called for an international conference to decide on ways and means of eliminating the risks posed by such weapons.

My delegation confirms that negotiations to rid the world of weapons of mass destruction, especially nuclear weapons, should be accorded the highest priority and seriousness by the international community because of the unimaginable disasters and predicaments that they may cause. Those who consider the percentages of weapons of mass destruction, especially nuclear weapons, will realize that they are much higher than those required for the security,

defence and deterrence policies of all States of the world. This impels us as members of this peace-loving Organization to redouble international efforts to provide a propitious environment for machinery that will eliminate such danger.

It is regrettable that the nuclear States are still unable to muster the political will to reach agreements to reduce their nuclear arsenals as a first step towards eliminating all kinds of lethal weapons of mass destruction. Therefore, we hope that agreement will be reached to hold a fourth special session of the General Assembly on disarmament in the near future.

There is no doubt that regional security is closely intertwined with international security. Therefore, the security and stability of the Middle East and the Arab Gulf require the building of confidence among political entities there. This can be achieved by seriously considering turning the area into an area free of weapons of mass destruction.

Israel's refusal to accede to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and to place its nuclear installations under the full-scope safeguards regime of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) creates a serious imbalance, poses a grave risk to regional security in the Middle East, and compromises the Treaty's universality, despite the fact that more than a quarter of a century has elapsed since it entered into force. This is a blatant flouting of the will of the international community in this respect; numerous demands by the international community have been to no avail. What Israel has achieved by using its light and heavy weapons against defenceless Palestinians and the martyrdom of the Palestinian child, Mohammed Al-Durra, in full view of the whole world, is clear evidence of Israel's abusive use of its internal forces, let alone its threat that it is capable of entering into a war with its neighbours in which it will triumph.

All the above confirms that Israel's military force is not defensive or for deterrence purposes only, but is a destructive, aggressive force to which Israel may have recourse at any time. Testimony to that is what is taking place today. We cannot fail here to refer to the unjustified acts perpetrated against the sovereignty and territorial integrity of States, whose victims are innocent citizens.

The illicit transfer of and trafficking in conventional weapons, especially light weapons, is a source of disquiet for us all, especially when they find their way to certain groups that ride roughshod over the right to life, peace and tranquillity by using such weapons in terrorist acts that destabilize many countries and pose a risk to their security and internal safety as a result of demands by terrorist groups. My country calls for specific ways to be found to reduce the flow of light weapons so that they will not fall into the hands of such groups.

Illicit trafficking in small arms and light weapons is a crime to which Bahrain attaches great importance, because of its negative humanitarian, social and economic implications. There is a close link between such crime, organized crime and terrorism in general. Illicit trafficking in small arms and light weapons is practically non-existent in Bahrain, because of the Government's effort to control this crime. Control measures include Law No.16 of 1976, which prohibits any person from trafficking in small arms and light weapons. Such weapons are not licensed, and severe punishments are meted out to those who possess them.

No one would disagree about the dangers posed by landmines. Thousands of defenceless citizens of all ages and groups have been victims of them. Therefore, we welcome the efforts of the United Nations Mine Action Service (UNMAS), and hope that all minefields will be demined. We call on all States that export such weapons to pause and contemplate before selling them to countries that may abuse them and thus cause scores of thousands of casualties. We have many examples of such situations.

World leaders at the Millennium Summit reconfirmed their desire to strive for the elimination of weapons of mass destruction, particularly nuclear weapons, and to keep all options open for achieving this aim. They also decided to take concerted action to end, once and for all, the illicit trafficking in small arms and light weapons. Their Declaration impels us to confirm the necessity of implementing United Nations resolutions on disarmament and conventions and treaties in this respect. The implementation of the resolutions of international legitimacy and of international conventions will provide an environment conducive to world peace and tranquillity. We are confident that international cooperation for arms control, whether of conventional or nuclear weapons, will always remain the goal of the United Nations in the third millennium, so that we may be able to build a human and cultural society where love and lofty ideals

prevail and where future generations live in peace, tranquillity and prosperity.

Ms. Chan (Singapore): The delegation of Singapore would like to express its warmest congratulations to the Chairman and his colleagues on their election to the Bureau. We assure them of our full support and cooperation and express our confidence that the Chairman will bring the Committee's work to a punctual and successful conclusion.

This session of the General Assembly is of special significance. As the Millennium Assembly, it has the special responsibility of initiating the implementation of the commitments made by our Heads of State during the recent Millennium Summit. This responsibility is one which we are pleased to see both Member States and the Secretariat taking seriously. The Summit Declaration recognizes that peace and security are closely intertwined with economic development in any country. Without economic prosperity, peace will not long endure.

Disarmament is a function of the security environment. We can draw a loose analogy with the domestic environment. Singapore practises total disarmament within its own borders, so to speak, among its own citizens. Our gun control laws are among the strictest in the world. That is because citizens know that they can rely on the efficiency and impartiality of the police and the judiciary to assure their security against armed lawlessness. That condition does not exist in the international context. There is no global police force or global judiciary to secure countries against external or internal violence. Such internationally constituted forces as can be deployed under the United Nations Charter are applied largely according to political considerations. Therefore, as long as the world consists of independent nation States, States will need the means to ensure their own security. That is why Article 51 of the United Nations Charter explicitly recognizes States' rights to self-defence. A world without weapons of any kind is not a practical or realizable dream. It would also not necessarily be a safer world. Total disarmament as a principle cannot become a reality unless States can be confident that they do not have to provide for their own security.

How can States be assured of their security? *Internationally and domestically, the rule of law is* what ultimately assures the stability of any community. In the community of sovereign States the rule of law is expressed by the network of multilateral disarmament treaties. The Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) and the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC) are among the most prominent examples of concerted efforts to introduce the rule of law into the international security environment. We believe that the NPT is still one of the cornerstones for nuclear disarmament. We support the extension of strong verification regimes, similar to that of the Chemical Weapons Convention, to other arms control conventions. We hope that a tight verification protocol for the Biological Weapons Convention can be agreed by the Ad Hoc Group of the States parties to the Convention as soon as possible. Building confidence, including through reliable verification procedures, is an indispensable aspect of any disarmament regime.

Weapons of mass destruction do not belong in the category of arms whose possession can, even in principle, increase State security. Their potential for huge destruction of life, and possibly even human civilization itself, renders them utterly unsafe, not only for those against whom their use is threatened, but also for neighbouring countries and their possessors. We welcome the successful outcome of the Review Conference of the NPT this year, and we hope that there will be greater progress in nuclear disarmament. Universal participation in, and individual respect by States parties for, the international legal regimes limiting the existence of weapons of mass destruction, is the surest way for the international community to secure itself against their threat.

Support for the rule of law in the international community is a cardinal principle for Singapore. It is for this reason that we urge all nations to accede to the NPT, the Chemical Weapons Convention and the Biological Weapons Convention, and also urge the parties to the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty to continue to respect and comply with all its terms.

There is some momentum towards establishing multilateral legal regimes for conventional weapons. We recognize the suffering and loss of life caused by the uncontrolled and illicit proliferation in many regions of the world of conventional weapons, particularly small arms and light weapons. These weapons are now used largely in conflicts within States rather than between them, in circumstances in which security is clearly damaged, rather than enhanced, by

their presence. We look forward to the 2001 United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects. We hope that it will encourage States to take substantive and concrete steps to curb the illicit trade in these weapons. In this context, however, we reiterate that legitimate trade for purposes of self-defence and the maintenance of international law and order would not be an appropriate focus for the Conference.

In the design of suitable control regimes for conventional weapons, similar considerations apply as to the regimes for weapons of mass destruction. Universal participation, willingness to adhere strictly to the regime and effective verification mechanisms are the keys to success. Building confidence is necessary so that parties can be assured of each other's intentions. To attempt to get rid of entire categories of conventional weapons would be counter-productive. If a country considered that its security was being negatively affected by an arms control regime, it might choose not to participate, thereby reducing the effectiveness of the regime. While the proliferation of arms fuels conflict in many regions of the world, each conflict takes place in specific circumstances. An arms control regime that works well in one region may be less successful, or even counter-productive, when transplanted wholesale to deal with a different set of historical and geographical factors in another region. Particularly in the case of post-conflict situations, arms control regimes have to be placed in a wider developmental context that takes into account the need for economic development and good governance to sustain peace and security.

The Millennium Summit Declaration reaffirmed our commitment to end the scourge of war. Our goal is a safer world, where the peoples can live and prosper in peace and security. We believe that in a world of nation States this goal can best be reached by strengthening the international rule of law, including the development of a web of universal and strictly observed multilateral disarmament conventions, which also instil confidence. And, since we do not live in a perfect world, these conventions should not deny States the possession of the appropriate conventional armaments to satisfy their legitimate right of self-defence in the event that the international rule of law fails to deter aggression.

The disarmament process deals with the means by which States and peoples make war. Even as we deal with this front, we cannot neglect the intimate connection between conflicts and poverty and lack of development. If these root causes of war are not addressed, disarmament will not in itself achieve the goal of reducing the chances of conflict. Any achievements in disarmament are part of the wider work of the United Nations for the betterment of the peoples we represent.

Mrs. Jarbussynova (Kazakhstan): Allow me first to add my congratulations to those already addressed to the Chairman on his election and to express my confidence that under his skilful leadership substantive progress will be made in dealing with the important issues on the Committee's agenda. I also extend my felicitations to the other members of the Bureau.

I also take this opportunity to express our gratitude for the excellent work of the Chairman at the last session, Ambassador González, and to thank Mr. Dhanapala for his comprehensive and detailed statement on various disarmament and international security issues.

All of us are participants in the continuous and long-standing discussions at the international level on the ways of global development in the twenty-first century, the freshest and historically most important of which was the Millennium Summit.

The boundary of the millennium coincides with the tenth anniversary of the independent development of the Republic of Kazakhstan. All countries of the world evaluate the first decade of their independence as a major event in their history. In analysing the past and looking ahead, Kazakhstan is striving to be a worthy member of the international community as we enter the third millennium, able to contribute to the work of the United Nations, especially in the field of disarmament, nuclear non-proliferation and the maintenance of global security.

I should like to refer to some issues that are important to my country and have also been the subject of discussion by other delegations in the First Committee.

Kazakhstan proved its adherence to the process of freeing the world of nuclear weapons by joining the parties to the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) in September 1996 as a non-nuclear-weapon State. After the withdrawal of the last nuclear warheads from its territory in April 1995 and the elimination of

the remaining nuclear device at the Semipalatinsk test site on 31 May 1995, Kazakhstan became the second State after South Africa to voluntarily refuse to possess nuclear weapons. This positive contribution by my Republic to the field of disarmament is reflected in the Final Document of the 2000 Review Conference of the States Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT).

At that Conference, for the first time in the past 15 years, five nuclear-weapon States made a collective and long-sought unequivocal commitment to totally eliminate their nuclear arsenals. Despite the doubts and pessimism existing before the beginning of the Conference, these commitments and the adoption of the Final Document bear witness to the success of our work, which benefited from the considerable contribution and diplomatic skill of Ambassador Abdallah Baali of Algeria, with the support of many delegations.

We hope that the Conference's positive outcome will give a new impetus to the global nuclear disarmament process. In this connection, we welcome the ratification of START II and its relevant Protocols by the Russian State Duma. We also call on both parties to start negotiations and reach agreement on START III.

We welcome President Clinton's recent decision not to deploy a national missile defence system, which we regard as an opportunity for the continuation of negotiations on the preservation of one of the cornerstones of global strategic stability, the Anti-Ballistic Missile (ABM) Treaty.

Proceeding from the necessity to fully strengthen the non-proliferation regime, Kazakhstan signed the CTBT in 1996. My country today participates practically and systematically in the work of increasing the efficiency of control over the observance of the Treaty's provisions.

As a result of the explosion of 100 tonnes of dynamite, which made the ground at the former Semipalatinsk test range shake, the last nuclear-weapon test site in the Degelen mountains was put out of action on 29 July this year. It was the third calibration experiment at the range as part of a series of Kazakh-American experiments. Simultaneously with the destruction of the test site, the experimental explosion was used to check and calibrate the nuclear-test International Monitoring System for conducting nuclear tests, created within the framework of the CTBT. The information received as a result of the experiments will allow the international community to discover and more precisely identify nuclear explosions — that is, distinguish them from earthquakes and explosions of commonly used explosive substances — and thus to ensure effective observance of the CTBT provisions and create monitoring systems that will make it impossible to conduct nuclear tests in any part of the world and keep them secret from the global community.

There are other types of weapons of mass destruction that pose no less danger than nuclear weapons. That is why it is vitally important not only to eliminate the old weapons of mass destruction, but also to establish a control mechanism to prevent the development of new types of such weapons. In 1993 Kazakhstan signed the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC), with the purpose of strengthening the international regime for the non-proliferation of all types of weapons of mass destruction, and it will remain strongly committed to its obligations.

At the same time, it should be noted that the international instruments for the elimination of weapons of mass destruction — primarily the NPT, the CTBT and the CWC — have not yet gained universal support, and thus cannot be fully effective. The situation with regard to the ABM Treaty gives cause for concern. We call on all countries to radically change this situation and support the Secretary-General's proposal to hold an international conference to find ways to avert the nuclear threat.

In supporting the phased and steady process of nuclear disarmament, Kazakhstan is of the view that establishing an instrument to control the manufacture of fissile materials is the first stage. The stockpiles of enriched uranium and plutonium and the large quantities of fissile material received from destroyed nuclear warheads pose a threat to the non-proliferation process. In this regard, we call for negotiations within the framework of the Conference on Disarmament, of which Kazakhstan has been a member since August 1999, aimed at the conclusion of a cut-off treaty with regard to fissile material for military purposes. We also welcome Russia's initiative to elaborate and implement, with the participation of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), an international project that would allow the phasing out of weapons-grade materials — enriched uranium and pure

plutonium — from use in civil nuclear-power production.

Transparency in the field of control and the reduction of conventional arms provide a good basis for preventing a destabilizing build-up of weapons in any region or an excessive concentration of weapons in any State. We support the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms, to which we have provided information on a regular basis since 1992, and consider it to be the most important component of such control. We also welcome the broadest participation of States Members of the United Nations in the functioning of this important international instrument. In this regard, we also support the proposal to convene next summer the United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects. We also welcome the convening of the informal inter-sessional consultations coordinated by the Chairman of the Conference's Preparatory Committee, parallel to the work of the First Committee, which will help us to be better prepared for the second session of the Preparatory Committee, scheduled for next January.

Kazakhstan fully supports the humanitarian orientation of the Ottawa Convention, whose goal is the complete elimination of anti-personnel mines. Kazakhstan is continuing to make its contribution to international efforts in this area and strictly observes the moratorium on the export of anti-personnel mines, including their re-export and transit. However, in our view, the movement for the complete prohibition of anti-personnel mines should be an ongoing and step-by-step process based on the mine Protocol to the Convention on inhumane weapons.

Kazakhstan, attaching paramount importance to the process of maintaining peace and stability at a regional and thus at a global level, follows with great attention the realization of the initiative to establish a nuclear-weapon-free zone in Central Asia. We are confident that such a zone will constitute an important step towards strengthening the nuclear non-proliferation regime and promoting general and complete disarmament. We will continue to participate consistently and constructively in the work being carried out to establish that zone. We express our gratitude to those delegations that have expressed understanding on this issue.

The non-nuclear States quite naturally asked about being granted security assurances, and have a right to expect firm legal guarantees. Kazakhstan fully shares the understanding that one possible way to solve this problem could be the adoption of a protocol on security assurances. We view positively Mongolia's contribution to the process of general and complete disarmament, and fully support its tireless efforts to establish a nuclear-weapon-free zone. We also welcome the statement by the five permanent members of the Security Council concerning security assurances for Mongolia, in view of its unique situation, and hope that they will take further steps promoting all aspects of Mongolia's external security, in accordance with resolution 53/77 D.

Kazakhstan highly appreciates the work of the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Asia and the Pacific, which is an effective instrument in helping to create an atmosphere of cooperation and disarmament in the region. The Centre renders essential assistance to the five Central Asian States in drafting a treaty on the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in Central Asia.

Kazakhstan, consistently acting for the creation of security structures on the Asian continent, and fully abiding by its commitments to important international instruments, spares no effort to realize the initiative of convening the Conference on Interaction and Confidence-Building Measures in Asia (CICA). We are convinced that such a conference has a rational essence, and call on the United Nations and the Asian States to continue their support for the CICA process, in the interests of Asian and global security.

Finally, I again assure the Committee of our full support for efforts aimed at the adoption of important decisions on strengthening the non-proliferation regime and promoting regional and global security. We are ready to strengthen cooperation with all other delegations to achieve our common objectives.

Mr. Shobokshi (Saudi Arabia) (*interpretation from Arabic*): It gives me great pleasure to congratulate the Chairman on his election and to wish him every success in his work. I also congratulate the other officers of the Committee. I am confident, in view of the Chairman's experience and knowledge, that he will conduct the Committee's work in a professional manner which will lead to achieving the desired results. I also assure him of my country's readiness to cooperate with him in order to reach the successful conclusion of our work.

International and regional efforts to achieve disarmament make us hopeful of increasing international awareness of the need to rid the world of all weapons, because of their threat to international peace and security. Given Saudi Arabia's commitment to the United Nations Charter and the principles of international law, which are the cornerstones of its foreign policy, we pay special attention to strengthening the role of the United Nations in all fields, especially international peace and security and disarmament. Saudi Arabia believes firmly that these issues are one, and that the world cannot live in peace and stability without them.

Proceeding from Saudi Arabia's position, which always calls for security for all, and its efforts to eliminate weapons of mass destruction throughout the world, it was one of the first countries to sign the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) and the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). It also refrained from producing or acquiring nuclear weapons or allowing a third party to place nuclear weapons on its soil. The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia actively participated in the 2000 Review Conference on the future of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, and adopted a positive position in efforts to reach a total ban on nuclear-weapon tests. It participated also in the Executive Council of the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons.

The Kingdom also commended the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice in 1996, which affirmed that all countries should be committed to continue the negotiations for the total elimination of nuclear weapons under tight and effective international supervision. It also actively participated in the efforts of the Arab League to formulate a treaty to make the Middle East an area free of weapons of mass destruction.

All these efforts and positions are true proof of the good intentions of Saudi Arabia regarding disarmament and international security issues, in addition to creating an international environment free from nuclear and other destructive weapons.

The success in establishing nuclear-weapon-free zones in certain areas of the world as a result of cooperation between the countries involved, and their belief in peaceful coexistence, is a positive step towards creating a world free from weapons of mass destruction. Regrettably, the Middle East is not free from nuclear weapons, because Israel still refuses to adhere to calls from the United Nations, the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), the Non-Aligned Movement, and the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC) to desist from developing, producing and testing nuclear weapons. Israel also refuses to accede to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty or to subject its nuclear facilities to the IAEA safeguards system. It also shows no enthusiasm whatsoever for the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East. Thus, Israel remains the only country in the region to possess nuclear and chemical weapons that are not subject to international supervision.

The Israeli position contradicts its pronouncements in favour of peace. Real peace should be founded on trust and good intentions among the countries and peoples of the region, and not on the possession of nuclear weapons, the threat to use them and attempts to impose its hegemonic will on other countries. These policies not only result in creating instability in the region, but also threaten international peace and security.

Accordingly, the Government of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia calls upon Israel, the only country in the region that has not yet acceded to the NPT, to take the necessary steps to do so immediately, in accordance with the relevant General Assembly and Security Council resolutions. All Israeli nuclear activities should be subjected to the International Atomic Energy Agency safeguards until the Middle East is free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction.

Despite our belief in enhancing the efficiency of the NPT by strengthening the International Atomic Energy Agency safeguards system and making it universal, we believe that we should introduce controls and standards that enhance progress in the elimination of all weapons of mass destruction, in accordance with General Assembly resolution 1 (I) of 1946. Accordingly, we urge all States which have not yet acceded to the NPT to take the necessary steps to do so and subject their nuclear facilities to international inspection as a contribution to international peace and stability.

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia supports transparency in armaments as one means to consolidate international peace and security. It also believes that

for transparency to succeed it must follow definite and clear principles that are balanced, comprehensive and non-discriminatory and that will strengthen national, regional and international security for all countries in accordance with international law.

In this regard, the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms represents a first attempt by the international community to deal with transparency at the international level. Despite the possible value of the Register as one international means to build trust and as an early warning, it has faced some problems, most notable of which is that more than half the Member States of the United Nations have continuously declined to provide information to it. That fact should impel us to deal effectively with the fears of those States, in a manner that guarantees international participation.

In this regard, my country affirms the response of the members of the League of Arab States to the Secretary-General contained in document A/52/312, dated 28 August 1997, on the Register. This affirms that an enlarged Register in accordance with General Assembly resolution 46/36 L, which established the Register, should include information on advanced conventional weapons and weapons of mass destruction, especially nuclear weapons.

In conclusion, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia declares its hopes and aspirations for the creation of an international community in which peace, stability and coexistence prevail for the prosperity of all mankind.

Mr. Bakoniarivo (Madagascar) (*spoke in French*): At this session the First Committee has chosen U Mya Than to take charge of its work. We very much appreciate his election to the chairmanship of this major Committee and sincerely congratulate him and the other members of the Bureau. My delegation assures him of its cooperation as he carries out his mandate.

We begin our work in a climate tinged with an optimism resulting from the encouraging commitments made by many world leaders at the Millennium Summit, but also a climate fraught with concern in a constantly changing world facing a wide variety of threats. The international peace and security to which we all aspire has still not become a reality, notwithstanding positive elements in the negotiating process in certain parts of the world. This year's report of the Secretary-General on the work of the Organization makes it clear that the nature of the threats to peace and security has changed since the end of the cold war, having moved from international conflicts to civil wars and from border violations to the violation of the rights of the individual.

It is all the more alarming, therefore, to note that in 1999, for the first time in the post-cold-war period, military expenditures rose, taking total spending to approximately $780 billion, or 2.6 per cent of the global gross national product. The solemn commitment by numerous world leaders to

> "spare no effort to free our peoples from the scourge of war"

and to

> "seek to eliminate the dangers posed by weapons of mass destruction" (*A/RES/55/2, para. 8*)

came at just the right time to help to usher in a new era in international relations.

We were also strengthened in our conviction by the positive outcome of the sixth Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), when for the first time in 15 years such a conference was able to adopt its Final Document by consensus. My delegation hopes that this decisive step will open the way to significant and tangible progress in nuclear disarmament, both bilaterally and multilaterally.

In this context, Madagascar, given our commitment to the Indian Ocean Zone of Peace, particularly welcomes the recent accession to the NPT of four States of our region, and hopes that this step will be followed by the other States of the zone that have not yet become parties.

The seriousness of the nuclear threat hanging over mankind leaves no justification whatever for keeping such weaponry for any period, or in any form. In this vein, Madagascar supports the proposal to convene an international conference to identify ways of eliminating nuclear dangers. Madagascar hopes, moreover, that the unequivocal commitment by the nuclear-weapon States to eliminate their nuclear arsenals will be translated into deeds in the first few years of this new millennium.

Consideration of mankind's supreme interests leads my delegation to believe that a State's greatness should be measured not by its military potential, but by

its effective contribution to fostering full development of the human potential in a safer environment, free from fear. Similarly, Madagascar reaffirms its conviction that international peace and security must be based not on the arms race, but on relationships of confidence and reciprocal esteem between States. Transparency with regard to arms is essential in promoting the relationships of trust that are indispensable in consolidating peace. It is in that spirit that Madagascar contributes to implementing resolution 54/43 of 1 December 1999, "Objective information on military matters, including transparency of military expenditures", as indicated in document A/55/272.

The proliferation of small arms and light weapons continues to cause concern to the international community, because of their involvement in the increased number and prolongation of conflicts. Although light in weight, they have substantial consequences, including the disruption of social and economic structures and a heavy toll in human lives. They undoubtedly caused most of the destruction and violent deaths of the twentieth century. It is deplorable that more than 5 million people, 90 per cent of them civilians, have lost their lives in the 170 wars that have broken out since the end of the cold war, including those still being waged.

Eliminating the scourge of small arms proliferation, which not only threatens international peace and security, but also hampers the socio-economic development of many countries, requires that the international community adopt a united and coordinated approach. In this sense, it is important that we do not lose sight of the implications of economic underdevelopment and other factors that spawn and breed the insecurity that drives the continuous demand for arms.

As Africa is the continent hardest hit by this problem, Madagascar supports the recommendations of the group of African experts on small arms and light weapons that met in Addis Ababa from 17 to 19 May this year, notably regarding the prevention and reduction of the proliferation of and illicit trade in small arms and light weapons, along with the policies, institutional arrangements and operational measures to tackle this problem. We also endorse the Group's call for suppliers do everything necessary to further African initiatives for controlling and reducing the proliferation of and illicit trade in these weapons, in particular by involving the suppliers in dialogue. Madagascar hopes that the 2001 United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects will lead to the establishment of an international juridical framework to slow the illicit trafficking in small arms and light weapons, and to the devising of a code of conduct governing arms transactions.

My delegation believes that recommendations from the Conference should include international standards for marking small arms and light weapons and related ammunition, as well as for certificates of use and for monitoring arms brokerage. In the search for ways and means to fight this scourge, Madagascar will support all proposals designed to limit the right to manufacture and sell small arms and light weapons to producers and merchants authorized by States. In the final analysis, strategies for coping with this problem should include a definition of the legitimate place of small arms and light weapons in global society; consideration of steps to limit them to clearly defined areas; and the promotion of their elimination from situations in which they have no place.

Whether in the realm of weapons of mass destruction or of conventional arms, general and complete disarmament must remain the ultimate goal for building a world of peace and progress. To attain the goal of cutting poverty in half by 2015, the international community must seriously examine the link between disarmament and development. The upward trend in military expenditures and their impact on national and international development strategies must be reversed, so that States can transfer resources now driving the arms race spiral into socio-economic development. The fact is that, notwithstanding progress made by certain countries in terms of their development, it is still far outweighed by military expenditures. In at least 84 countries military expenditures exceed health spending. Nuclear arms alone have devoured approximately $8 trillion, one third of the world's total output in 1997.

As the melting pot of universal values, the United Nations has an essential role to play in promoting the culture of peace and advancing the cause of disarmament. We express our gratitude to Mr. Jayantha Dhanapala, Under-Secretary-General for Disarmament Affairs, for his dedication to that end. We realize that the road to general and complete disarmament is long and hard. However, we are confident that our joint

determination, reflected in the Millennium Declaration, to make this new century also a new era will guide us in building a world that gives all its people a chance to make their dreams come true.

On that hopeful note I wish us all success in our work, so that what we do here will further the vast undertaking of bringing about a better future for mankind.

Mr. Zackheos (Cyprus): I congratulate the Chairman on his well-deserved election and assure him of my delegation's full support. I also congratulate the other members of the Bureau.

Let me at the outset express our appreciation to Under-Secretary-General Dhanapala for his excellent statement and his devotion and tireless efforts in the field of disarmament.

The Republic of Cyprus aligns itself with the statement delivered by the French presidency on behalf of the European Union and associated countries, and I will thus limit my comments to some issues of particular concern to my country.

Last spring the States parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) adopted a consensus Final Document at their Review Conference. Under the leadership of Ambassador Abdallah Baali of Algeria, the parties bridged their differences and, despite the uncertain international context in which the Conference was taking place, the international community demonstrated a remarkable commitment and determination to strengthen the non-proliferation regime and work towards the full realization of the goals of the Treaty. We warmly welcome the unequivocal commitment by the nuclear-weapon States to the total elimination of their nuclear arsenals, and we fully share the view expressed by many speakers that the international community has to make every effort to build upon the successful outcome of the Conference.

We congratulate the Russian Federation on the recent ratification of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) and START II. As regards the bilateral arms reduction process, we support the prompt entry into force and timely implementation of START II and the early commencement of negotiations on START III with a view to achieving further reductions in strategic nuclear weapons.

Cyprus fully supports the consolidation of the existing nuclear-weapon-free zones as an important component of our goal of a nuclear-free world. In this respect, we attach great importance to their expansion, and in particular the establishment of such zones in areas of tension, including one in our own region.

Two years ago when addressing the Committee I raised the issue of the decision of the Turkish Government to build a nuclear power plant in a highly seismic area in south-eastern Turkey. I referred to the obvious environmental consequences of that decision for all the peoples of the Eastern Mediterranean and the potential risk to international peace and security. We note with satisfaction that the Turkish Government has provisionally suspended this project, and we urge that it finally be cancelled altogether.

During the past year Cyprus has joined both the Nuclear Suppliers Group and the Australia Group. I take this opportunity to express our deep appreciation to the member States of both groups for their support for our candidature and to reiterate my Government's firm commitment to the cause of the prevention of the illicit transfer and proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and related dual-use goods and technologies.

I should also like to refer briefly to the Conference on Disarmament and to join previous speakers in expressing our concern over its continuing inability to undertake substantive work, including the immediate commencement of negotiations on the fissile material cut-off treaty. With regard to the Conference's membership, the Republic of Cyprus reiterates its wish to participate fully in the work of the sole multilateral forum in the field of disarmament. We firmly believe that further enlargement of the Conference would in no way hinder its effectiveness. On the contrary, the Conference's reform and its expansion to all those wishing to participate in its work might give it a new impetus.

Illicit trafficking in small arms is an issue of grave concern. We are fully supportive of all national, regional and international efforts with regard to this phenomenon, and consider that more effective action to eliminate it is an imperative need in an increasingly interdependent world. The cost to human life and the economies and social fabric of many societies stemming from our inaction is simply unacceptable. We are encouraged by the international attention given

to the problem, culminating in the convening of the United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, to be held in 2001.

We recognize that much more needs to be done with regard to conventional weapons. However, we are much encouraged by the overwhelming response of the international community to the ban on anti-personnel mines. I wish to reiterate in this respect that, despite the continuing foreign occupation of almost 40 per cent of the territory of the Republic of Cyprus, we decided to sign the relevant Convention as an expression of our determination to join the international community in its efforts to eliminate this totally inhumane method of warfare. Against the background of the constant threat posed by the 36,000 occupation troops stationed on the island, we consider our decision to be a further demonstration of our strong commitment to disarmament and respect for multilateral norms, such as that set by the Ottawa Convention.

We are currently engaged in proximity talks under the auspices of the Secretary-General in order to reach a just, workable and lasting solution to the Cyprus problem on the basis of Security Council resolutions. A matter of great concern for both the Government and the people of Cyprus, is the issue of security. In this context, I recall once again the proposal made by the President of the Republic of Cyprus, Mr. Glafcos Clerides, for the demilitarization of the Republic of Cyprus, which we consider to be a genuine offer for peace on the island and in the region at large. President Clerides's proposal calls for a specific programme aimed at the dismantling of all local military forces, the withdrawal of all foreign forces and settlers from the territory of the Republic of Cyprus and its demilitarization, as stipulated in the relevant United Nations resolutions. The proposal also envisages the stationing in Cyprus of an international force with an appropriate mandate from the Security Council.

Our President has stated that our proposals and suggestions are still valid and timely, and as such they remain on the negotiating table, for we remain committed to seeking a solution to the problem by peaceful means, and we will continue to exert every effort towards that end.

We have always advocated that the reduction of forces and armaments can reduce the risk of an outbreak of a military conflict and can therefore contribute to confidence-building and conflict resolution. We strongly believe that peace and security can be achieved only through the implementation of a collective international security system. We, like others, are encouraged by recent developments in the areas of disarmament and arms control, culminating in the unprecedented outcome of the landmark 2000 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). We therefore agree with the Secretary-General that, as stated in his report to the Organization, that above all else what we need is a reaffirmation of political commitment at the highest level to proceed towards the realization of our lofty goals.

Mr. Abelian (Armenia): I begin by congratulating the Chairman and the other members of the Bureau on their election.

This session of the Committee is the first opportunity in the twenty-first century for us to thoroughly discuss issues related to arms control and disarmament and to seek ways to eliminate dangers posed by weapons of mass destruction.

Armenia affirms the crucial role of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) for international peace and security in eliminating the proliferation of nuclear weapons, both horizontal and vertical, and promoting the peaceful uses of nuclear energy. We believe that these two objectives, enshrined in the Treaty, will continue to serve the vital interests of all States parties for years to come. As the Secretary-General, Mr. Kofi Annan, rightly observed in his recent address to the Advisory Board on Disarmament Matters

> "progress in the disarmament field tends to reflect the general political climate of the day".

The review period since 1995 has been marked by both achievements and setbacks for the global nuclear non-proliferation regime, which ran parallel with both the positive and unwelcome developments on the global and regional scene.

Of course, further efforts are needed to involve in the nuclear non-proliferation regime those States that have not yet acceded to the Treaty. The problem of the proliferation of nuclear weapons is global, and the NPT is a global rather than a regional Treaty. However, it is

essentially regional security problems that stand in the way of achieving the NPT's universality.

The recent 2000 NPT Review Conference was crowned with success, with the adoption of the Final Document by consensus. We consider the measures agreed in it to be an essential contribution to the cooperation of nuclear and non-nuclear States in the field of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. I should also like to point out that one of the landmark achievements of the Conference is the expression of the need to develop verification mechanisms guaranteeing the implementation of each arrangement. The outcome of the Conference itself and the scope of the agreed measures are positive steps towards a world free of nuclear weapons.

Armenia supports the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones that are freely arrived at among the States of the regions concerned. In 1995 two new treaties establishing nuclear-weapon-free zones in South-East Asia and Africa were signed. We also back any new proposals for the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones in other regions of the world where the States concerned have reached a consensus among themselves prior to seeking international consideration.

The Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) is the first disarmament agreement negotiated within a multilateral framework that provides for the elimination of an entire category of weapons of mass destruction. Its scope, the obligations assumed by States parties and the system of verification envisaged for its implementation are unprecedented. The lessons learned from the establishment and successful implementation of the Convention should encourage other similar initiatives in the fields of disarmament and non-proliferation to achieve equally tangible results.

Recently we marked the twenty-fifth anniversary of the entry into force of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on Their Destruction (BWC). The Convention has made an important contribution to the world community's collective efforts to eliminate the threat of weapons of mass destruction. The strong commitment of States parties to the Convention led them to establish in 1994 an Ad Hoc Group, open to all States parties, for the consideration of appropriate measures, including possible verification measures, to be included in a legally binding instrument with a view to strengthening the Convention.

Armenia welcomes the significant decision of the State Duma of the Russian Federation to ratify START II. This landmark decision not only constitutes an achievement in nuclear disarmament in itself, but also opens the way for the commencement of negotiations on START III, as was previously agreed between the United States and Russia. We also welcome the readiness of Russia, upon the successful consummation of START III, to further reduce ceilings of deployed strategic warheads to 1,500, which will mark a major step by the Russian Federation and the United States towards the fulfilment of their obligations under article VI.

We are facing yet another danger now: the growing pressure to deploy national missile defences. Armenia is really concerned that their deployment could lead to a new arms race, set back nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation policies, and create new incentives for missile proliferation. We hope that the relevant States will take these factors into consideration before taking steps which could jeopardize the Anti-Ballistic Missile (ABM) Treaty, thus reducing rather than enhancing global security.

There is no need to confirm the vital role the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) plays in meeting the challenges the international community faces in the areas of peace and development. By preventing the proliferation of nuclear weapons, improving and strengthening nuclear safety, and helping to develop the peaceful uses of nuclear technology for sustainable development, the Agency makes a unique contribution to the purposes of global peace and prosperity.

I should like to turn first to the Agency's role in seeking to prevent nuclear proliferation. Despite some progress in the reduction of nuclear weapons — in particular, the Russian Federation's ratification of the START II agreement — there is still deep concern within the international community over the major threat that such weapons continue to pose to international peace and security.

Armenia, demonstrating its commitment to the non-proliferation regime, has become one of the initial signatories of the Additional Protocol. Despite its legitimate security concerns, Armenia has forgone outright the option of having on its territory any types

of weapons of mass destruction. On 24 September 1991, just three days after Armenia declared its independence, the Armenian Parliament adopted a decision to abide by the NPT. Shortly after its formal accession to the Treaty as a non-nuclear-weapon State in 1993, we concluded a comprehensive safeguards agreement with the International Atomic Energy Agency. That made it possible for us to reactivate our peaceful nuclear programme with the assistance of the IAEA and to solve the drastic energy crisis in the country.

We are all aware that the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe (CFE Treaty) is the cornerstone of European security. The adaptation of the Treaty at the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) summit in November 1999 constituted an important achievement in the field of conventional arms control. Armenia actively participated in the negotiations on the adaptation of the Treaty, and considers it to be an important step towards the new security environment of our region. With the other States parties to the Treaty, Armenia has undertaken to move forward expeditiously to facilitate completion of national ratification procedures so that the agreement on adaptation can enter into force as soon as possible. We hope that the transparency and predictability provided by the CFE Treaty will contribute to regional stability.

The problem of the destabilizing accumulation and uncontrolled spread of small arms and light weapons has gained prominence on the international agenda over recent years. This prioritization is a logical conclusion of the negative consequences arising from large accumulations and flows of such weapons. In this context, we will support all efforts by the international community at the international, regional and subregional levels to prohibit the illegal manufacture and transfer of small arms. In the United Nations, sets of recommendations for measures to prevent and reduce the proliferation of small arms and light weapons were agreed in the 1997 and 1999 reports of United Nations experts on small arms. We attach great importance to the forthcoming United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects.

Armenia welcomes the increasing momentum to achieve a global ban on the production, stockpiling, transfer and use of anti-personnel mines. We also welcome the unilateral moratoriums announced by individual States on the production, sale, transfer, import or use of anti-personnel mines. Notwithstanding Armenia's security considerations and the defensive value of anti-personnel mines, we believe that the human and social costs of landmines far outweigh their military significance. Armenia's full participation in the Ottawa Convention is contingent upon a similar level of political commitment by the other parties in the region to adhere to the Convention.

Armenia is not a party to the 1980 Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW). However, the Armenian Government is considering the possibility of acceding to the Amended Protocol II on landmines. In the light of this, we decided, on a voluntary basis, to submit the annual report required under articles 11 and 13, and to contribute to improving the coordination and effectiveness of global mine action. In this context, I should also like to thank the United States Government for its readiness to assist regional States in humanitarian demining projects and its organization of joint humanitarian demining training programmes in Georgia for three regional States as a confidence- and security-building measure in the region.

In conclusion, Armenia looks forward to actively participating in the work of the First Committee this year.

Mr. Kuchynski (Ukraine): On behalf of the delegation of Ukraine let me congratulate U Mya Than on his assumption of the chairmanship of the First Committee. We are confident that with his skilful guidance, and support from all delegations, the work of our body will be successful and productive.

Less than a month ago an outstanding forum of historic significance was held at the United Nations. The Millennium Summit became a unique occasion for the heads of State and Government to express their views and exchange opinions concerning the most fundamental challenges to be addressed by the international community at the turn of the new millennium. It proved once again that the issues of international peace and security, arms control and disarmament remain among the imperative priorities for humankind.

A decade ago the Declaration on the State Sovereignty of Ukraine was adopted. By this document my country solemnly proclaimed its intention to adhere to three non-nuclear principles — not to accept, produce or acquire nuclear weapons. By turning over

the pages of a calendar of the last 10 years, one may ascertain that Ukraine reliably put these principles into practice by fulfilling the relevant treaties on nuclear non-proliferation and on nuclear-weapons reduction, and by ensuring simultaneously their strict implementation. The removal of all nuclear weapons from Ukraine's territory more than four years ago was a significant event in this context.

We welcome ratification of START II by the Russian State Duma earlier this year, which we believe will boost the process of nuclear arms reduction by the United States and Russia. In our view, it could also provide an additional impetus to the negotiation process on nuclear disarmament with the participation of all nuclear-weapon States.

In this context, we would like to point out that Ukraine continues to follow closely the developments around the Anti-Ballistic Missile (ABM) Treaty. From our perspective, the future of the agreements establishing the basis for the maintenance of strategic stability in the world largely depends on the fate of this Treaty. Ukraine remains committed to the ABM Treaty and recognizes its fundamental value in ensuring continuity of the strategic arms reduction process.

My country assessed positively the announcement by President Clinton of postponement of the decision concerning the development of a limited national missile defence. At the same time, the uncertainty of the issue of succession under the ABM Treaty is, from our point of view, a factor negatively affecting its viability and effectiveness.

We welcome the ratification by the Russian Federation of the so-called package of New York agreements to the ABM Treaty signed in 1997, and call upon other parties to follow suit. Those documents will be considered and, hopefully, ratified by the Ukrainian Parliament during its current session.

My country is encouraged by the outcome of the sixth Review Conference of the States Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). It is of particular importance that the Final Document of the Conference reflects an agreement of the five nuclear-weapon States to take further practical steps towards the implementation of article VI. The fact that the States parties were able to reach consensus on the Final Document is truly remarkable, especially against the background of the thirtieth anniversary of the NPT's entry into force.

The Final Document also recorded a consensus of the States parties that the elimination of nuclear weapons is

> "the only absolute guarantee against the use or threat of use"

of such weapons. In other words, nuclear doctrines and deterrence concepts are not sufficient to eliminate totally the risk of repetition of the nuclear holocaust. We fully realize, however, that, despite the momentum that the Review Conference gave to the pursuit of further disarmament and non-proliferation goals, not all the problems and difficulties have been overcome, and that there is much challenging work to be done to ensure the implementation of the steps agreed by the Conference.

The Final Document also stipulates two important issues related directly to the Conference on Disarmament: the immediate commencement of negotiations on the fissile material cut-off treaty, with a view to their conclusion within five years, and the necessity of establishing an appropriate subsidiary body. Regrettably, the situation within the Conference on Disarmament is characterized by lack of real progress, and Ukraine is really concerned about it. Still, we believe that the results of the 2000 NPT Review Conference will have a positive impact on the negotiation process in the framework of the Conference on Disarmament.

My country continues to strictly abide by its commitments pursuant to the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC). We believe that the conclusion of negotiations on the verification protocol to the Convention, and its subsequent effective and comprehensive implementation, fully serves the far-reaching interests of the international community.

Full implementation of the Convention on the prohibition of chemical weapons, the CWC, is among the priorities for Ukraine in the sphere of arms control and disarmament. No effort should be spared to achieve the main goal of the Convention — the complete elimination of one of the most hideous types of weapons of mass destruction. It is important that the States parties should be provided with the necessary assistance in their efforts to meet time-frames envisaged for the destruction of chemical weapons and the relevant production facilities. I am pleased to underline that the National Authority of Ukraine for CWC implementation continues its fruitful cooperation

with the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW).

At the crossroads of two millenniums the problems related to certain types of conventional weapons, such as anti-personnel landmines, small arms and light weapons, have reached the same critical level of importance as the issues of non-proliferation and the elimination of weapons of mass destruction. We are confident that the 2001 Review Conference of the States Parties to the Certain Conventional Weapons Convention (CCW) will elaborate further steps directed at the progressive marginalization of anti-personnel landmines and their role in military doctrines, and at the effective protection of civilians from their use. At the same time, Ukraine remains devoted to the goal of the Ottawa Convention: a total ban on anti-personnel landmines. Its provisions are being implemented in my country.

We fully share international concern regarding the problems created by the continuing increase in the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons. Ukraine is prepared to work further in search of the mutually acceptable approaches to the solution of this complex issue, particularly in the course of the preparatory process for, and during, the 2001 United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Light Weapons and Small Arms in All Its Aspects. We are convinced that the Conference will be able to find solutions to this problem.

In conclusion, I express our hope that the coming years will be marked by new important achievements in arms control and disarmament, thus paving the way to a more secure and safer world. We are convinced that the First Committee will continue to play an outstanding role in this regard.

Mr. Moraru (Republic of Moldova): At the outset I join previous speakers in congratulating the Chairman, and the other members of the Bureau, on their well-deserved election. I am confident that under his chairmanship our deliberations will be successful. I also express the appreciation of our delegation to the Under-Secretary-General for Disarmament Affairs, Mr. Jayantha Dhanapala, for his opening statement and his continuing efforts in support of disarmament.

As we enter a new century and a new millennium, we must intensify our efforts to strengthen international peace and security. To this end, continuing progress in the areas of disarmament, arms control and non-proliferation is absolutely vital.

This year the international community strongly reaffirmed, in a number of forums, the importance of non-proliferation and nuclear disarmament. In particular, the 2000 Review Conference of the States Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) has strengthened the basic provisions of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty as an instrument to deal with nuclear weapons and to promote nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament. At the same time, the unequivocal undertaking by the nuclear-weapon States to accomplish the total elimination of their nuclear arsenals brought further clarification of their obligation to implement article VI of the Treaty pertaining to nuclear disarmament. This historic commitment is of particular relevance, especially since, unlike other legal multilateral instruments banning weapons of mass destruction, the NPT does not prohibit nuclear weapons as such, but only their proliferation. At the Millennium Summit world leaders also stated their resolve to strive for the elimination of weapons of mass destruction, including nuclear weapons.

The Republic of Moldova welcomes these important positive developments, and considers that they represent excellent opportunities for the achievement of a major breakthrough in the field of disarmament and non-proliferation in the twenty-first century. In our view, it is imperative to capitalize on this momentum and to take practical steps to implement the package of decisions adopted at the sixth NPT Review Conference.

From this perspective, the Republic of Moldova calls for the overcoming of the stagnation in negotiations on the relevant treaties supporting nuclear non-proliferation, and for developing more constructive attitudes within the Conference on Disarmament. This will create, in our opinion, favourable premises for a more active disarmament process, which should lead to the adoption of implementable and verifiable nuclear disarmament measures in the future.

The Republic of Moldova is concerned that the process of nuclear disarmament could be seriously hampered as a result of the lack of progress towards the entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) and differences on the Anti-

Ballistic Missile (ABM) Treaty. We therefore call upon all States whose signature and ratification is necessary for the entry into force of the CTBT to sign and ratify it at the earliest date possible. At the same time, they should reaffirm the role of the ABM Treaty as the cornerstone of international peace, security and strategic stability.

The Republic of Moldova supports transparency in armaments as one important means of consolidating international peace and security. We fully share the view that an increased level of transparency in armaments contributes greatly to confidence-building and security among States, and that the establishment of the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms and the United Nations standardized reporting system constitutes an important step forward in the promotion of transparency in military matters. With a view to achieving universal participation, Moldova this year provided the requested data and information on military expenditures, and it will continue to do so in the future.

While most arms control efforts focus on weapons of mass destruction and heavy conventional weapons, small arms and light weapons designed for military use are responsible for killing and injuring thousands of innocent people in armed conflicts throughout the world. We share the view that the proliferation of small arms and light weapons is one of many symptoms of increased intra-State conflicts since the end of the cold war. Although the accumulation and illegal circulation of small arms and light weapons does not in itself cause conflict, their excessive accumulation has exacerbated internal conflicts, complicated peace-building and undermined peace agreements in many countries, including my own.

In numerous countries, especially in those affected by separatist movements, stocks are stolen for use by paramilitaries or sold off along with illegally produced armaments in other zones of conflict. This phenomenon is characteristic of the Transdniestrian region of the Republic of Moldova, controlled by a separatist regime. This zone is over-militarized. In recent years there has been recorded in this region the illegal production of different types of armaments, including small arms, light weapons and anti-personnel landmines. Through some third countries these types of armaments have reached other conflict zones, supporting terrorist and criminal groups as well as secessionist movements.

At the same time, there are stockpiled in the region huge quantities of armaments, including both accounted for and unaccounted for Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe (CFE Treaty)-limited equipment belonging to the foreign troops still stationed there. Cases have also been recorded of armaments leaking from those stocks to separatist illegal paramilitaries. Therefore, it is very important to take measures aimed at withdrawing foreign military arsenals and troops from the territory of the Republic of Moldova, in accordance with the Istanbul summit decisions. In this context, I should like to express our gratitude for the financial assistance provided by a number of States to eliminate or withdraw the armaments and ammunition I have mentioned.

Taking into account also the complicated situation in the Transdniestrian region, the Government of Moldova is taking measures to strengthen national legislation on export control. Last year the Moldovan Parliament adopted a law regulating the trade in military equipment, armaments and other military-technical equipment. Although that legislation does not currently extend to the Transdniestrian region, the Government has established additional mobile customs posts along the border with this region. These posts will also be tasked with overseeing the implementation of the new law on import and export controls.

The dimensions of the threat posed by small arms require us to act globally. That is why the Republic of Moldova strongly supports the efforts to create effective international mechanisms for the prevention of their illegal transfers, especially in conflict and post-conflict areas. The international Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, to be held next year, will be an important opportunity to address this issue comprehensively. We hope that it can agree on a concrete action plan in the global, regional and national context.

The Republic of Moldova fully supports the efforts of the international community to strengthen the multilateral legal instruments aimed at reducing the suffering of combatants and civilians in armed conflicts. It therefore acceded on 8 September 2000 to the 1980 Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW) and gave its consent to be bound by its four Protocols. Moreover, the Parliament of Moldova ratified the Ottawa Convention on anti-personnel landmines this year. The full participation of all States, including large ones, and their compliance remain

essential preconditions for the effectiveness of every disarmament regime. We therefore call upon all States that have not yet done so to take all measures to become parties to these important conventions.

Finally, I should like to emphasize that national, regional and international efforts to curb the proliferation of and illicit traffic in small arms and light weapons, and the prohibition of certain conventional arms that have indiscriminate effects, including anti-personnel landmines, can be successful only with international assistance and cooperation. Therefore, the international community should mobilize the necessary funding to provide the required financial and technical assistance to all countries, especially those in need, so that the affected countries are better able to implement effective arms controls or to eliminate such weapons.

The Acting Chairman (*spoke in French*): I remind members that the deadline for the submission of draft resolutions has been set at 6 p.m. tomorrow, Friday, 13 October. It will be strictly observed. I urge members to submit draft resolutions as soon as possible.

The meeting rose at 5.45 p.m.

United Nations A/C.1/55/PV.13

General Assembly
Fifty-fifth session

Official Records

First Committee
13th meeting
Friday, 13 October 2000, 10 a.m.
New York

Chairman: U Mya Than ..... (Myanmar)

The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.

Agenda items 65 to 81 *(continued)*

General debate on all disarmament and international security items

Mr. Beyendeza (Uganda): My delegation joins others who spoke before me to congratulate you, Sir, on your election to the chairmanship of our Committee. May I also congratulate other members of the Bureau. The Uganda delegation will fully cooperation with you as you guide the deliberations of the Committee.

My delegation also wishes to express its appreciation to the Secretariat through the Department for Disarmament Affairs for the excellent work done in producing relevant and updated documents, thus ensuring that the issues of disarmament are kept in full view of our Committee. May I particularly thank the Under-Secretary-General for Disarmament Affairs, Mr. Dhanapala, for his inspiring opening statement.

Our Committee is meeting at a very important moment, soon after the Millennium Summit at which the heads of State and Government pledged to

> "spare no effort to free our peoples from the scourge of war"

and resolved to

> "eliminate the dangers posed by weapons of mass destruction". *(resolution 55/2, para. 8)*

It is against the backdrop of this universal commitment of the world leadership that my delegation wishes to focus on two issues of greatest concern to us, which are related to what the leaders are resolved to eliminate: the issues of small arms and light weapons and of anti-personnel landmines.

As we did last year, my delegation reminds the Committee that small arms and light weapons have singularly remained the major instruments of war in developing countries. For us in Africa in general, and in Uganda in particular, their threat is more real and fundamental than that presented by nuclear weapons; the destruction and loss of life and property resulting from small arms and light weapons are overwhelming. Small arms, light weapons and landmines may not be the main causes of conflicts in Africa or elsewhere, but the staggering statistics of deaths, maiming and so forth, as well as the total destruction, resulting from armed conflicts in which these deadly weapons are used, cannot be over-emphasized.

While my delegation will continue to urge the international community to address the root causes of conflicts, which we believe arise partially from the lack of social and economic development, we alert the Committee to the harmful situation arising out of the terrible misuse of small arms, light weapons and landmines. In most cases, this misuse has led to violent crimes, suicides and murders in our societies. The matter becomes more complicated when these small arms become the main weapons used by child soldiers, particularly in countries engaged in armed conflicts.

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the interpretation of speeches delivered in the other languages. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room C-178. Corrections will be issued after the end of the session in a consolidated corrigendum.

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Although the long-term impact of the use of these arms in our societies, especially the impact on children, is yet to be fully assessed, what is indisputably emerging is a culture of violence and intolerance among the youth who have been subjected and exposed to these arms. Education systems have been disrupted, and a suffering and traumatized generation is emerging. One wonders what the future holds for these children.

The Under-Secretary-General for Disarmament Affairs in his opening statement illustrated how tremendous resources have been invested in armaments. My delegation regards resources invested in the acquisition of small arms, light weapons and landmines as wasted resources, wasted because they could be better invested in urgent social and economic development projects, which would be more beneficial to mankind than arms. We need, therefore, to readjust our priorities, reduce the levels of expenditure on armaments and reinvest these resources in programmes that promote peace, security and development.

In this regard, my delegation would in particular appeal to those 70 countries that manufacture and trade in small arms and light weapons to review their trading practices and ensure that these dangerous weapons are not sold to, or do not end up in the hands of, non-State actors. That is why Uganda welcomes and supports the preparatory process, under the chairmanship of Ambassador Carlos Dos Santos of Mozambique, for the United Nations Conference on the subject. Uganda looks forward to the convening in 2001 of the Conference, which we hope will fully address the questions of illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in all its aspects.

I have devoted much of my statement to small arms, light weapons and landmines, and not to nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction. This is not because such weapons are less important, but because the menace and the destruction around us have been the result of small weapons rather than of nuclear weapons.

For example, during the last 20 years more than 2 million have lost their lives because of small arms, light weapons or landmines. Ninety per cent were civilians, and 80 per cent of them were women and children. More than 12 million people have been disabled. There are more than 500,000 child soldiers armed, not with atom bombs, but with AK-47s.

Seventy per cent of the arms in the global market have been purchased by least developed countries, at the expense of their development. This point regarding the amount of money spent on armaments was also well made by the Under-Secretary-General in his opening statement. In 1997 the African continent spent more than $760 million on such arms. It is no wonder, therefore, that we have more than 55 million AK-47s in circulation in Africa. That is why my delegation is concerned.

I must say a word about nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction. Although there has been progress with respect to the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) and START II, much remains to be done. We note, for instance, the failure once again of the Conference on Disarmament to agree on a substantive programme of work and that lack of consensus with regard to multilateral negotiations on nuclear disarmament, the arms race in outer space and a fissile material treaty. All these negotiations need to be concluded as soon as possible.

However, on a more positive point, my delegation welcomes the outcome of the 2000 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and we are particularly happy that the nuclear-weapon States have now realized that the total elimination of nuclear arsenals is the only absolute guarantee against the use of nuclear weapons. Incidentally, this is exactly what non-nuclear States saw a long time ago and have been advocating. Our delegation will therefore support all draft resolutions that call for total elimination of all nuclear weapons and the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones. We will also support treaties on the prohibition of the use, stockpiling, production and transfer of anti-personnel mines and their destruction.

My delegation looks forward to working with all delegations that are genuinely concerned with the prohibition of the development, production and stockpiling of bacterial and toxin weapons and their destruction.

Let me finally remind the Committee that it should be remembered that small arms, light weapons and landmines have already destroyed enough. We do not need to add nuclear and other weapons of mass destruction to this planet.

Mr. Akpalou (Togo) *(spoke in French)*: On behalf of the delegation of Togo, I should like at the

outset to convey to you, Sir, our heartfelt congratulations on your election to the chairmanship of the First Committee. Your vast insight into matters of disarmament and international security as well as your experience in this arena, augur very well indeed for the success of our deliberations. My delegation assures you of its unreserved support in the exercise of your responsibilities.

We also extend our congratulations to the other members of the Bureau.

My delegation noted with great interest the various reports and notes of the Secretary-General dealing with issues falling within the purview of the Committee, and appreciated the opening remarks delivered by Mr. Jayantha Dhanapala, Under-Secretary-General for Disarmament Affairs, to whom my delegation presents its warmest congratulations. In the context of the current debate we wish now to make the following comments.

First and foremost, my delegation would like to remind the Committee that one of the essential tasks incumbent upon the United Nations is the maintenance of international peace and security. This responsibility, stemming as it does from the Charter, was reaffirmed at the Millennium Summit where the heads of State and Government renewed their commitment to spare no effort to deliver mankind from the scourge of war and to eliminate the potential dangers represented by arms of all kinds. Since the best way to attain these ends is, without question, general and complete disarmament, or at least to bring arms under control, all must be done to encourage States, individually and collectively, to work in concert towards turning that goal into reality.

The end of the cold war has created an environment propitious for nuclear disarmament and yet, notwithstanding the efforts aimed at reducing nuclear weapons, there are still stockpiles of such weapons constituting a constant source of danger to peace and security the world over. For my delegation, totally eliminating nuclear weapons is the only absolute guarantee against the use or the threat of their use. The Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), held in New York this year, made it possible for new commitments to be made to nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. Through the Final Document adopted at the Conference, the States Parties were called upon to do all they possibly could to ensure implementation of the provisions of the Treaty, so as truly to make progress towards eliminating nuclear weapons, putting an end to the spread of such weapons throughout the world, and to strengthening the basic norms that govern the peaceful uses of nuclear energy.

It is important that these measures be effectively implemented and that the States Parties to the NPT to strive towards that end.

As can be seen from the Secretary-General's report in document A/55/116, the matter of missiles and their proliferation continues to be a highly alarming security issue for the community of States. My delegation is sensitive to the views of certain States with regard to the establishment of a global missile monitoring system. We echo the recommendation issued at the Ministerial Conference of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries held in Cartagena, Colombia, in April 2000, affirming the need for a comprehensive, balanced and non-discriminatory approach as a contribution to international peace and security.

Consistent with this approach, it is our view that the Treaty on the Limitation of Anti-Ballistic Missile Systems (ABM) signed between the United States and the former Union of Soviet Socialist Republics in 1972 continues to be one of the pillars for stability in the world inasmuch as it has direct consequences for international peace and security.

That, in turn, is why — afraid as we are that any unilateral approach aimed at winning absolute superiority in the arms arena might prove prejudicial to the future of that Treaty and thus to security the world over — my delegation deems it highly desirable for both parties to strive to keep that Treaty intact and to abide by its provisions.

It is in this context that we very much applaud the decision taken by the United States President to defer deployment of a United States anti-missile defence system.

Moreover, the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones in certain regions of the world would appear to us to be a critically important contribution on the part of the regions concerned to the maintenance of international peace and security. That is why my delegation exhorts the countries whose regions remain on the sidelines to do all they possibly can to create nuclear-weapon-free zones in their parts of the world.

Appreciating the importance of the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones around the world, Togo, like other African countries, is committed to ensuring the establishment and consolidation of such a zone in Africa through the Pelindaba Treaty signed in Cairo on 11 April 1996. In this connection, I wish to inform the Committee that parliamentary proceedings aimed at ratification of this Treaty by our country are at a very advanced stage.

The proliferation of light arms and trafficking in such arms constitute yet another major source of alarm for the international community in general, and Africa in particular. That phenomenon has become particularly acute in Africa and has fuelled conflicts that afflict us. The belligerents, as well as former combatants, form groups and engage in acts that sow fear and desolation amongst our people, who wish to live in peace. We thus see, more or less everywhere, a chronic rise in trans-border crime, armed robbery and funeral processions choking our roads.

To fight this scourge, the subregions around our continent are organizing. As far as Western Africa is concerned, a number of steps have been taken in the context of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS). The representative of Mali, whose country holds the current chairmanship of ECOWAS, took stock in his statement of a number of different initiatives launched in the subregion to fight the proliferation of small arms, and my country supports that statement. My delegation nonetheless wishes to emphasize the declaration of the Moratorium on the Importation, Exportation and Manufacture of Small Arms and Light Weapons among the ECOWAS member States, which took effect 1 November 1998.

The solemn and unified character of that declaration reflects the unanimous will of the heads of State and Government of the West African subregion to seek appropriate strategies to control the proliferation and trafficking of small arms and their illegal possession by civilians. In this context, they have established the Programme for Coordination and Assistance for Security and Development, whose main mission is to coordinate priority activities to be undertaken to achieve the moratium's objectives. In the framework of these activities, we note that small arms have been collected or destroyed in Liberia, Mali and the Niger.

I also wish to recall decision 12/99, taken in December 1999 by the ECOWAS heads of States and Government, inviting all member States to create national commissions to fight the proliferation of light weapons. My country is in the process of adopting provisions required to establish its national commission. It already has, however, a technical commission responsible for collecting arms held illegally by civilians.

Just as West Africa has done, other subregions of our continent are striving to fight against the proliferation of small arms. We will cite the example of the States of the Southern African Development Community (SADC), which are currently negotiating, with the European Union's support, a protocol on small arms.

Togo hopes that the international United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, in 2001, will afford the international community the opportunity to seek ways and means to fight this scourge. We are sure that in the preparatory process for the Conference, States will strive to issue recommendations to be submitted for consideration at that Conference. For its part, Africa, which intends to participate actively in that Conference, has envisaged holding, as a lead-up to that important meeting, a pan-African ministerial conference to examine all aspects of the issue.

My delegation cannot raise the issue of small arms without mentioning anti-personnel mines, which are a formidable category of weapons that constitute a threat to mankind. Anti-personnel mines kill and mutilate indiscriminately and jeopardize the use of arable land. With the adoption of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-personnel Mines and on Their Destruction, the Ottawa Convention, the international community committed itself to fighting the danger represented by these mines. My country, which has ratified this instrument, invites the countries that have not yet ratified it to do so. Accession to this Convention by countries producing anti-personnel mines is necessary for its universal implementation. It is also important that the countries with the appropriate means help in demining affected areas.

My country, which is host to the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Africa, would like to hail the Centre's actions carried out with

African subregional organizations in their struggle against the proliferation of and illicit traffic in small weapons. That is why we hope that appropriate financial, human and material resources will be made available to it to allow it to respond favourably to the various requests it receives. I take this opportunity to thank the donors for their multifaceted assistance to the Centre in its work.

The constantly growing number of international juridical instruments covering the globe in the area of disarmament mirrors the major concerns that States feel about the arms race. But it is one thing to conclude a treaty, and quite another to see to its implementation. That is why our States must become aware of the need for disarmament and display the political will to ratify the relevant international instruments and to abide by them scrupulously.

While recalling the inextricable links between development, peace and security, my delegation wishes to stress the pertinence of Mr. Dhanapala's remarks made in his opening statement, on 2 October 2000, to this Committee. The Under-Secretary-General for Disarmament Affairs noted that

> "The Stockholm International Peace Research Institute has recently reported that global military expenditure has, for the first time since the end of the cold war, started to rise. The figure for 1999 was roughly $870 billion. Meanwhile, almost half of the world's population lives on less than $2 per day. Let the tragic contrast between these numbers touch the conscience of us all as we embark on our work." (*A/C.1/55/PV.3*)

Can anyone find a more heartrending and convincing plea to States to allocate the bulk of their resources to priority activities of development rather than to military purposes?

Mr. Erwa (Sudan) (*spoke in Arabic*): I wish at the outset to join those who preceded me in congratulating you, Sir, on your election to the chairmanship of the Committee. I also congratulate the other members of the Bureau. I am sure that you will lead the work of this Committee to a successful conclusion. I also wish to pay tribute to Mr. Dhanapala, Under-Secretary-General for Disarmament, for his efforts in disarmament and in promoting the Organization's role in this regard.

Since the start of the Committee's work, many statements have been made in the general debate, including Mr. Dhanapala's, and all expressed deep concern about the current climate of international relations and disarmament, particularly nuclear disarmament. The Sudan shares the international community's concern and reaffirms its belief that nuclear disarmament and the elimination of weapons of mass destruction, the major danger facing humanity, should be the cornerstone of disarmament, in accordance with the Final Document of the tenth special session, in 1978, the Sixth Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and the Millennium Declaration, which stressed the importance of the elimination of weapons of mass destruction, particularly nuclear weapons. The Sudan believes that urgent steps must be taken to convene a session of the Conference on Disarmament on the elimination of nuclear weapons.

The Sudan reaffirms its intention to continue working with the rest of the international community in efforts to eliminate weapons of mass destruction. The Sudan was among the first to sign the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-personnel Mines and on Their Destruction, and the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction. Indeed, we have established a national committee to coordinate all our activities related to the latter Convention.

We share international concerns about the illicit traffic in small arms and light weapons, and we support the convening in 2001 of the United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects. We reaffirm our view, which we have stated on a number of occasions, that the Conference agenda should be limited to the illegal trade in small arms and light weapons. The Sudan has participated in regional efforts to address the proliferation of small arms and light weapons, including the Great Lakes Region and the Horn of Africa Conference on the Proliferation of Small Arms, held at Nairobi, Kenya, in March 2000; indeed, the Sudan signed the Nairobi Declaration. Further, we participated in the First Continental Meeting of African Experts on Illicit Proliferation, Circulation and Trafficking of Small Arms and Light Weapons, held at

Addis Ababa in May 2000. Khartoum was the site this year of a meeting of ministers of the interior from Eastern and Central Africa; the proliferation of small arms and light weapons was a main item on its agenda.

While underscoring the importance of controlling the proliferation of conventional weapons, we must also emphasize our right to use such weapons to defend our borders and our territorial integrity, a right enshrined in the Charter, in international law and in international conventions and covenants.

The delegation of the Sudan believes that the proliferation of small arms and light weapons is not the underlying cause of conflicts. We believe that the solution lies in addressing the root causes: the economic and social situation and foreign interference in conflicts in a number of volatile areas.

The Sudan shares the rest of the international community's interest in transparency in armaments as a means of consolidating international peace and security. At the same time, we note that the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms is anything but transparent; it is high time that the Register were expanded to include data on weapons of mass destruction and on advanced technology used for military purposes. The Register does not take into account the situation in the Middle East, where Israel continues to occupy Arab territories and to possess the most advanced and destructive weaponry. Israel is now using such weapons against defenceless civilians in Palestine, including women and children. Israel is defying the will of the international community and continues to refuse to accede to the NPT, as called for by participants in the 2000 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, the Final Document of which stressed how important it was for Israel to accede to the Treaty and to place its installations under comprehensive International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) safeguards. Israel's continued defiance of the international community, the encouragement it receives from a super-Power and that super-Power's silence in the face of Israel's aggressive intentions and practices and its refusal to participate in disarmament efforts reflect the policies of hypocrisy and double standard practised by that Power, which pressures vulnerable States to accede even to conventions that are less important than the NPT while shamelessly placing all its nuclear and military expertise at Israel's disposal.

We are pleased to reaffirm our readiness to work with you, Mr. Chairman, towards a consensus with a view to promoting and pursuing the objectives of disarmament.

Mr. Osei (Ghana): As one of the last speakers in the general debate, Mr. Chairman, let me join others who spoke before me in congratulating you on your election and in commending you for the able manner in which you and the other members of the Bureau have steered the work of the Committee thus far.

We also appreciate the comprehensive statement by the Under-Secretary-General for Disarmament Affairs, Mr. Jayantha Dhanapala, who in his customarily lucid manner updated the Committee on trends on the disarmament front over the year since the Committee's last session. It is indeed alarming and sobering to be reminded — as Mr. Dhanapala reminded us — that the world is still awash with arms: some 30,000 nuclear warheads and 500 million small arms. It is equally disconcerting that global military expenditure, currently standing at $750 billion, is rising while almost one half of the world's population lives on less than two dollars a day.

We remain convinced that for developing non-nuclear-weapon countries, such as Ghana, there does indeed exist a symbiotic relationship between disarmament and development, a perception which dictates the need for civil society to persist in its resolve at the dawn of the new century to cut down on military spending and to redirect the peace dividend into economically sustainable development. In that expectation, disarmament, for us, must remain at the heart of the United Nations agenda to ensure and sustain international peace and security, conditions which we believe are necessary for all productive human activity. The United Nations must therefore continue its search for new ways and means to work towards the objective of nuclear disarmament and arms non-proliferation, and must identify confidence-building measures as part of that process.

Critical in that regard are the commitment and political will of Member States, particularly the nuclear-weapon States, which have so far eluded us. It is therefore refreshing to note that our political leaders, in their Millennium Declaration, resolved

> "To strive for the elimination of weapons of mass destruction, particularly nuclear weapons, and to keep all options open for achieving this aim,

including the possibility of convening an international conference to identify ways of eliminating nuclear dangers". (*resolution 55/2, para. 9*)

The question that we must answer as experts is how to build on this bold commitment on the part of our leaders and thus regain the confidence, trust and goodwill of civil society, which has grown cynical over the years as a result of the uneven progress in the field of disarmament.

The successful outcome of the Sixth Review Conference in May of this year has nurtured a propitious climate, and this momentum must be sustained in order to restore confidence. The Conference, as we all recall, agreed on a number of practical steps that constitute mutually reinforcing ways and means to achieve nuclear disarmament. The Millennium Declaration, in my delegation's view, gives the nuclear-weapon States the opportunity to honour the unequivocal undertaking they gave to work towards the total elimination of their nuclear arsenals.

Much disappointment and frustration has been expressed in this debate about the stalemate in the Conference on Disarmament, which, nonetheless, remains the only mechanism for negotiations on the issue. As Ambassador Petko Draganov, President of the Conference, noted in this Committee when he introduced the Report of the Conference on Disarmament (A/55/27),

> "Despite the combined efforts of successive Presidents of the Conference throughout the session, consensus on a programme of work proved elusive due to the persisting divergence of views and priorities attributed to various items on the Conference's agenda". (*A/C.1/55/PV.6*)

As he reported further,

> "The Conference did not re-establish or establish any mechanism on its specific agenda items". (*ibid*)

There is no need to apportion blame for this stalemate; indeed, it must be the shared responsibility of the nuclear weapon States. Suffice it to caution that the Conference on Disarmament, through its inertia or paralysis, risks degeneration into irrelevance, justifying calls for a new rather than a renewed agenda. It is, therefore, our hope that the member States of the Conference will be able to overcome the divergence of views, reach mutually acceptable solutions at the next session and enable the Conference to begin to work on the critical issues in the disarmament field.

A fortiori, the Secretary-General's proposal to convene a major conference to help identify ways of eliminating nuclear danger deserves support, not only to sustain the momentum of the successful NPT Review Conference, but also to give a sense of realism to the commitment made by the leaders in their Declaration. Despite efforts to stifle its relevance and dynamism, the United Nations Disarmament Commission, the deliberative arm of the General Assembly on disarmament, must also be recognized as a complimentary body that helps sensitize the international community to disarmament objectives and keep the vision of disarmament alive.

Ghana has joined in the overwhelming consensus in favour of the convening of an international Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms to address the problem in all its aspects. West Africa, which has experienced the effects of the proliferation of such conventional weapons, owing to their easy accessibility to non-State actors, is gradually building up machinery at the subregional level to curb, manage and control the flow of these arms. Building on the Mali moratorium, the Organization of African Unity (OAU) convened a meeting of African experts on small arms and light weapons in May this year in preparation for the OAU Ministerial Conference on the same issue, which is scheduled to be held in Bamako from 27 November to 1 December of this year. Ghana will, therefore, continue to engage actively, not only in subregional and regional initiatives on the issue, but also in the preparatory sessions of the conference itself, in the hope of sharing experiences in order to develop a global regime to regulate and monitor the production, distribution, export and import of such arms, and thus help check this menace.

On the Conference itself, we wish to reiterate the importance of the choice of a venue that would enable the widest possible participation of all member States, particularly those with limited participation at the United Nations level. We also want to take this opportunity to commend the efforts made so far by the Chairman of the Preparatory Committee, Ambassador Carlos dos Santos of Mozambique, for the work he has done in steering the affairs of the Preparatory Committee sessions up to now.

Let me also take the opportunity to welcome the statement read by the United States delegation on behalf of the five permanent members of the Council on the agreement reached concerning security assurances to Mongolia as regards its nuclear-weapon-free status. It is our conviction that such arrangements freely negotiated convey the right signals to the international community, particularly civil society, concerning our readiness to address such critical concerns.

Finally, Ghana believes that the First Committee's role in reinvigorating the United Nations Disarmament machinery must remain undiminished if the spirit of the Millennium Declaration is to be kept alive through the kinds of resolutions we agree on in this session.

Mr. Akram (Pakistan): I would like to apologize in advance for the length of my statement. It is a special pleasure for the Pakistan delegation, and for me personally, to extend our warm congratulations to you, Sir, on your well-deserved election as Chairman of the First Committee. Your long and vast experience in dealing with the problems of disarmament and international security assures us of a significant outcome for this session. The Pakistan delegation also wishes to congratulate the other members of the Bureau on their election and to express its high appreciation to your predecessor, Ambassador González of Chile, for the skilful manner in which he conducted our work last year.

A stable structure of international peace and security must be based on the principle of the sovereign equality and equal security of States. As proclaimed by the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament, the militarily significant States have the primary responsibility for disarmament. The strong must lead the way in the process of disarmament. It is the armed who are to be disarmed — not the weak and vulnerable who are to be kept unarmed.

Unfortunately, over the past decade, these principles of equity and equal security, adopted by consensus at the first special session, have been almost turned on their head. Double standards in arms control are becoming more entrenched. So called non-proliferation norms and provisions have been selectively and unequally enforced, penalizing some, while overlooking, if not actually endorsing, proliferation by others.

While nuclear non-proliferation is assiduously pressed on the vast majority of States as an article of faith, for the privileged, nuclear deterrence is regarded as the "supreme guarantee of security". In violation of the basic obligation under the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), nuclear weapons are stored with non-nuclear allies and are to be used jointly with them. Uncertain and unforeseen threats are offered as the rationale for maintaining huge arsenals of nuclear weapons. Military attacks, including the possible use of nuclear weapons, are envisaged even against non-nuclear-weapon States to deter or eliminate the threats and capabilities of so-called weapons of mass destruction. The use of force is contemplated without Security Council authorization and the military budgets of the most powerful States are rising. Weapons transfers to selected countries are expanding, even as embargoes are imposed arbitrarily on others.

Total security for some and total insecurity for the rest cannot be a durable basis for a new post-cold-war architecture of international peace and security. Injustice invites resistance and leads inevitably to conflict and instability.

The graph of hope for disarmament rose sharply at the end of the cold war. It declined with equal angularity over the past two years due to renewed acrimony between the major Powers and reversals suffered by the disarmament process. The graph of hope has risen again this year, mostly due to the consensus achieved at the NPT Review Conference and the deferred deployment of the national missile defence system.

The NPT parties seem to set great store by the unequivocal commitment given by the Treaty's five nuclear-weapon States to eliminating nuclear weapons. This is regarded as a new commitment delinked from the conditions of general and complete disarmament. We hope such assessments are correct. We hope to witness speedy implementation of steps towards nuclear disarmament. I must confess, however, that we are not holding our breath.

A senior official from one major nuclear Power, when asked about the unequivocal commitment to eliminating nuclear weapons, reportedly said that "nothing has changed". A confidential communication between the two leading nuclear Powers leaked to the press appears to confirm this.

The fact is that the recent setbacks to disarmament have not been reversed, as yet. The deployment of the national missile defence system has been wisely delayed, but development and testing are to be continued and the ultimate aim of the system's deployment has been affirmed. Moves are under way for the deployment of theatre missile defences in several regions of the world. The rejection of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) has not been reversed. Reports from civil society indicate that some of the laboratory tests being conducted may be in violation of the basic obligation under the CTBT not to conduct nuclear explosion tests.

Given these realities, it is hardly surprising that the Conference on Disarmament was unable to adopt a work programme this year. The commendable endeavours of successive Presidents of the Conference have succeeded in creating considerable common ground, textually. However, in our view, the Conference will be able to agree on a work programme early next year provided, first, that there is a real commitment to negotiations on nuclear disarmament; secondly, that the major Powers involved display flexibility on the mandate for the ad hoc committee on outer space; and thirdly, that the international political environment is propitious.

If a decision on deployment of the national missile defence system is taken or seems inevitable, it could have a cascading effect on international strategic stability. It could unravel several important disarmament agreements, especially the Treaty between the United States of America and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics on the Limitation of Anti-Ballistic Missile Systems (ABM Treaty). Deployment of theatre missile defences in certain sensitive regions could also adversely affect stability and arms control there and accelerate the production and deployment of missiles. This issue has serious security implications for Pakistan.

We are unconvinced that there are credible threats to the major Powers of ballistic missile attacks, with or without weapons of mass destruction, from developing countries. The ballistic missile programmes of these countries are decades behind those of the leading nuclear-weapon and other industrialized States. However, the deployment of ballistic missile defence systems could in fact fulfil the fear which ostensibly impels such deployment. Equally, fears of missile attacks by so-called non-State actors are fanciful and self-serving. Any missile attack would invite definite retaliation against the source of the attack, whereas unconventional or clandestine modes of attack do not have a return address. Therefore, non-State actors are unlikely to rely on missiles if they want to use violence against the major Powers.

Sadly, what happened yesterday in Yemen illustrates this point. The Pakistan delegation would like to take this opportunity to express its deep condolences to the United States Government and the American people, as well as to the families of those who lost their lives in this tragic incident.

The international community should urge the affirmation and further strengthening of the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty, including, perhaps, through its multilateralization. However, as the Sino-Russian joint statement of 18 July 2000 stated:

> "Non-strategic missile defence and international cooperation in this field, though not prohibited under the ABM Treaty, should nevertheless not prejudice the security interests of other countries ... or undermine global or regional stability and security."

We hope, therefore, that the draft resolution on this issue will also oppose the deployment of so-called theatre missile defences. Strategic stability should not be promoted at the cost of regional stability. Export of ABM systems to South Asia and other sensitive regions will inevitably intensify instability and accelerate the build-up of missile systems in those regions.

The central security threat today is not so-called missile proliferation in the third world; it is the threat arising from the thousands of missiles that are held on high alert by the major nuclear Powers. Acceptance of the concept of missile proliferation, which mirrors the NPT premise of inequality, will intensify the asymmetry in security between the industrialized and the developing countries. We cannot accept the premise that some States have the right to develop, possess and use ballistic missiles while others, including those targeted by such missiles, must be prevented by all possible means from acquiring missile capabilities. If missiles are essential to the security of major Powers, why should the developing countries forego this capability? If the major Powers and their alliance systems are unwilling to give up their missile capabilities, why should a developing country be expected to do so?

There is no internationally accepted legal norm against the acquisition of ballistic missiles by any country, just as there is no norm against the acquisition of military aircraft. Countries that do not have access to advanced and expensive aircraft may have no choice but to develop ballistic missiles as a means of self-defence in the conventional field. In practice, the arbitrary norms of the Missile Technology Control Regime, with their narrow focus, have eroded rather than enhanced regional security in certain regions, including South Asia.

The missile issue must be addressed comprehensively and equitably. The goal should be a global treaty for the regulation and progressive reduction of ballistic and cruise missiles as part of a comprehensive nuclear disarmament programme. Pakistan is, of course, prepared to address, as a matter of priority, those aspects of the problem which pose serious threats to global or regional peace and stability. To this end, an open and inclusive multilateral dialogue should be initiated aimed at negotiating interim measures to address the major missile-related threats to international and regional peace and security. These global measures could include: first, de-alerting nuclear weapons and missile systems; secondly, evolving multilaterally negotiated controls over the sensitive technologies involved; thirdly, ensuring alternative measures for maintaining military balance, especially in sensitive regions; and fourthly, expanding cooperation in technologies which can be utilized for peaceful purposes.

Pakistan welcomes the endorsement by the Millennium Summit of a conference to eliminate the nuclear danger. We look forward to further deliberations to identify possible action to this end.

We hope the Conference on Disarmament will soon commence, as part of its work programme, negotiations to conclude a legally binding international instrument on negative security assurances to non-nuclear-weapon States. Pakistan will table its traditional draft resolution on this issue. To be credible, such assurances will have to be unconditional and universal. All explicit and implicit threats of nuclear use against non-nuclear States should be expressly withdrawn.

Pakistan takes note of the statement in which the NPT's five nuclear-weapon States have extended security assurances to Mongolia. Pakistan also respects Mongolia's declaration of its non-nuclear-weapon status, just as we respect nuclear-weapons-free zones in those parts of the world which are denuclearized.

After five years of work in the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC) Ad Hoc Group, it is legitimate to expect the negotiations to bear fruit. The rolling text, which reflect the positions of all delegations, must remain the sole basis for negotiations. External inputs, such as non-negotiated texts, could create unnecessary controversy and delay. To have universal appeal, the BWC protocol must: first, contain meaningful provisions on cooperation and exchange for peaceful activities; secondly, replace ad hoc export control regimes by multilateral measures for trade facilitation, including powers to redress unjustified export barriers; and thirdly, cover the extensive bio-defence activities and relevant commercial programmes in all countries.

Regional approaches to international security, disarmament and non-proliferation have assumed special importance in the current international environment. The success or failure of security and disarmament measures in North-East Asia, the Middle East, South-East Asia and South Asia will have an important regional and global impact. Pakistan will once again submit a draft resolution on regional disarmament this year.

Pakistan welcomes the positive trends, including in the disarmament sphere, which have been witnessed recently in North-East Asia. In the Middle East, although the prospects of peace and disarmament have been damaged by recent developments, hopefully these have not been defeated. Pakistan deplores the loss of innocent lives. Peace in the Middle East, as elsewhere, must be based on equal security for all States of the region and the realization of the right of peoples to self-determination.

South Asia has been described as "the most dangerous place in the world". For Pakistan, the danger is clear and present. Almost all of our eastern neighbour's military assets — an army of 1.2 million men; over 700 combat aircraft, a number that is continuing to rise; a large naval flotilla, also increasing, with the anticipated acquisition of a second aircraft carrier; Prithvi missiles, of which initially 300 are to be produced — all of these are deployed against Pakistan along the border and the Line of Control in Kashmir. These capabilities are to be augmented with

additional acquisitions, estimated at over $10 billion, from three of the five permanent members of the Security Council and certain other States. Aggression and attacks are being threatened, with increasing frequency, by our neighbour's political and military leaders. Notwithstanding Pakistan's display of restraint, we face daily artillery barrages, small-arms fire and attacks on our posts along the Line of Control in Kashmir. The major Powers should restrain, not encourage, those who offer themselves as their "natural allies" from the path of confrontation and military build-up.

Although Pakistan's conventional capabilities have been severely eroded by unjust embargoes and sanctions, we possess the conventional means to defend ourselves against such aggression. However, we have no intention of mortgaging the future of our people by making huge investments in expensive weapons imports.

History will confirm that Pakistan was a reluctant nuclear power. We voted for the NPT in 1968. Since then, I must confess, our "graph of hope" has declined steadily. Even after our neighbour's 1974 nuclear explosions, Pakistan continued to pursue the goal of a nuclear-weapon-free South Asia. Once we acquired nuclear capability, we were content not to demonstrate it. Existential deterrence was good enough. When our neighbour conducted its nuclear explosions in May 1998, we received no credible indication that our security could be assured by other means. The five permanent members of the Security Council did not meet, nor was the Council convened. Our neighbour's leaders openly held out threats of the use of nuclear weapons to impose an unjust solution to the Kashmir dispute. Pakistan was compelled to act. We acted to re-establish the deterrence which had existed in South Asia for over a decade.

As Pakistan's chief executive, General Musharraf, has stated:

> "We only want to maintain a minimum credible deterrence to deter any aggression against our homeland ... We fully support the creation of a strategic self-restraint regime in the subcontinent and expect a positive response from our neighbour."

Pakistan's proposal for a strategic restraint regime involves three interlocking elements: first, mutual nuclear and missile restraint; secondly, conventional arms control and balance; and thirdly, peaceful resolution of the underlying sources of tension, especially the Kashmir dispute. Progress on all these elements is essential to build and sustain a stable structure of peace and security in South Asia. At the culmination of this process, it could be sanctified in a "no-war pact".

But the danger in South Asia cannot be defused, and a durable structure of security cannot be built, without open and sustained dialogue. Pakistan is prepared to engage in bilateral, plurilateral or multilateral talks to advance the cause of peace, stability and prosperity in South Asia.

Pakistan has demonstrated its desire for nuclear restraint in practice. We voted in favour of the CTBT and have declared a moratorium on nuclear testing. Our desire to sign the CTBT can be fulfilled as soon as we succeed in promoting a domestic consensus to do so.

We have agreed to open talks on a fissile material treaty in the Conference on Disarmament. A ban on fissile material production should be promoted through a universal, non-discriminatory and verifiable treaty. We will not accept arbitrary or advance obligations which do not meet these agreed criteria, nor will we agree to artificial deadlines. Pakistan will, as envisaged in the Shannon report, seek a solution to the problem of existing stockpiles in the course of the negotiations.

Pakistan has also taken steps to strengthen its controls on the export of sensitive materials and technology and is prepared to discuss further practical and equitable measures to prevent proliferation. Pakistan's strategic capabilities have always been under strict and secure military control and are safe from leakage, sabotage and surprise attack. We have now created a Nuclear Command Authority, chaired by the head of Government, to ensure, inter alia, robust accountability, safety, security and command and control in crisis situations.

While nuclear disarmament is rightly our highest priority, conventional arms control is assuming new significance for several reasons. Expenditures on conventional weapons are rising once again; massive transfers of weapons are taking place to selected countries, with serious implications for stability and peace in certain volatile regions; and the so-called revolution in military affairs, fuelled by the advance in military-related and information technologies, is adding to the complexity of preserving military balance

and stability and further accentuating the gross asymmetry in military power between the advanced and the developing countries.

It is essential to examine these developments and contain the destabilizing impact that they, and any possible responses to them, may have. We intend to pursue these ideas in multilateral disarmament forums, including the United Nations Disarmament Commission. Pakistan would also welcome a comprehensive study of recent developments in the field of conventional weapons with a view to ensuring well-considered decisions by the international community.

Pakistan welcomes the international attention given to small arms and light weapons in recent years. Action on this complex issue is required at the national, regional and global levels. As recognized by the Assembly, these endeavours must not compromise the right of States to self-defence or erode the legitimate struggle of peoples for the right to self-determination. The forthcoming international Conference on the illicit transfer of small arms should aim at a number of practical and pragmatic recommendations. The responsibility for past actions whose present consequences are left to be dealt with by certain countries, such as in Afghanistan, should be determined in order to arrange for redress and appropriate compensation.

Pakistan will seek to make a constructive contribution to the success of the Conference. We have taken several steps at the national level to prevent the illegal transfer or unauthorized use of small arms and light weapons. At the same time, our Government is making a heroic endeavour to reverse the consequences for Pakistan of the Afghan war through a campaign of de-weaponization within the country. We hope these endeavours will be reinforced through the decisions and cooperative actions to be adopted at the forthcoming Conference.

The issue of anti-personnel landmines has particular importance for Pakistan because we witnessed at first hand the plight and the suffering of innocent victims as a result of the massive saturation of Afghanistan with anti-personnel landmines. Millions of mines have still not been cleared in Afghanistan. It is ironic that while international publicity has been so focused on the issue of anti-personnel landmines, the resources required for demining are being reduced. We deplore, in particular, the 50 per cent reduction in the demining budget for Afghanistan of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees.

Pakistani experts and demining teams have participated extensively in demining operations in many parts of the world, including in several United Nations peacekeeping operations. We provided demining training in Pakistan and also imparted training to expatriate teams. We will continue to offer such in-kind contributions to global demining efforts.

Although our security environment does not permit us to accept a comprehensive ban on anti-personnel landmines, Pakistan will strictly abide by its commitments and obligations under the amended Protocol II on landmines, to the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons. We will continue to work with other States parties to promote universal acceptance of Protocol II. We are also open to further work on the issue of anti-personnel landmines in the Conference on Disarmament. Pakistan has an effective moratorium on the export of anti-personnel landmines. We are therefore prepared to open negotiations in the Conference on Disarmament to explore ways and means of formalizing a global instrument prohibiting exports.

In this era, when there are no "natural enemies", and thus no "natural allies", some seek to advance their political and military ambitions by playing on racial and religious fears to give life to the dangerous doctrine of an impending clash of civilizations. Indeed, some people are spending a lot of money and energy in important capitals to create new threat scenarios — sometimes with religious labels — which they believe will appeal in particular to policy makers and public opinion in the West. One should not lift a rock that is likely to land on one's own feet. Instead of scare scenarios and hate scenarios, intellectual and political energy should be directed towards evolving scenarios to promote durable peace and security in regions of tension and conflict. Economic growth, conflict resolution and arms control are essential elements of such an endeavour. As the Millennium Assembly has just affirmed, disarmament, development and conflict prevention and resolution are intimately interrelated — much more so in our globalizing yet unequal and insecure world.

I thank you, Mr. Chairman, for your patience. I promise that that was the first and only statement on disarmament to be made by my delegation this year.

Mr. Belinga-Eboutou (Cameroon) (*spoke in French*): First of all, I should like to begin by sincerely congratulating you, Sir, on your election to the chairmanship of our Committee. I should also like to congratulate the other members of the Bureau. The delegation of Cameroon would like to assure you of our full cooperation and unreserved support as you carry out your important functions.

I should also like to express my profound thanks to your predecessor, our colleague Raimundo González, for the skill and wisdom with which he guided our deliberations at the fifty-fourth session.

Last year, in our statement in the general debate in the First Committee in this room, we spoke of our deep concern about peace and security in the world and the lack of significant progress in the field of disarmament. At the beginning of the Millennium Assembly, in the wake of the Millennium Summit, which provided a historic opportunity for the leaders of the world to reaffirm their unshakeable faith in our Organization, the feelings that we had at that time have not changed a great deal. Indeed, information to the effect that during 1999 there was an increase in military expenditure throughout the world is not a cause for optimism. There are, however, some hopeful new signs that are cause for rejoicing.

The sixth Review Conference of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), which took place here in April 2000 under the chairmanship of our brother Ambassador Abdallah Baali of Algeria, raised hopes by concluding on an eminently positive note. The nuclear-weapon States explicitly agreed to work towards the total elimination of their nuclear arsenals.

My country welcomes this important progress, from which we hope to see some beneficial impact on the other sectors of the efforts being undertaken towards the elimination of weapons of mass destruction. Cameroon exhorts the countries concerned to show sustained political will in implementing this commitment.

Cameroon also welcomes the ratification by the Russian Federation of the Comprehensive Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) and of the Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty II on 14 April 2000. My country welcomes the decision of the United States Government to postpone the implementation of their anti-missile defence project.

Despite the encouraging nature of these developments, we should not lose sight of how much still remains to be done in order to safeguard the world from a nuclear holocaust.

There are many serious reasons for concern in this area. I will refer to some of them now. Four years after its opening for signing, the CTBT has still not entered into force. The work of the Conference on Disarmament is at an impasse, not having been able for the fourth consecutive year to reach an agreement on a programme of work and, all the more so, to start negotiations on a multilateral treaty banning the production of fissile material. The Conference on Disarmament has not arrived at a consensus on bringing together a fourth special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament.

One should also deplore the fact that the Pelindaba Treaty on a nuclear-weapon-free zone in Africa has still not entered into force, that nuclear weapon States have not acceded to the Protocol to the Bangkok Treaty creating a nuclear-weapon-free zone in South-East Asia and that the negotiations on the creation of other zones are at a standstill.

The proliferation of production of missiles and other weapons of mass destruction in various parts of the world also strikes as a serious ground for concern.

We must point out that the reasons for satisfaction are very much fewer than the reasons for concern. My country appeals to the international community to show courage and determination in order to remove forever the horrible threat of weapons of mass destruction for the future of humankind.

It is fortunate that our heads of State have solemnly undertaken this determination in the important Declaration of the Millennium Summit. It is up to all of us to work with determination and perseverance in translating that will into fact. In this context, my country supports the proposal by the Secretary-General of the United Nations to convene an international conference on identifying ways to eliminate nuclear dangers.

The need for the international community to focus efforts in order to remove the threat of

annihilation for humankind that is presented by weapons of mass destruction should not let us lose sight of the importance of the struggle to control and limit conventional weapons.

These weapons are indeed the ones that day in and day out cause death through armed conflicts all over the world with innumerable victims, especially among the civilian populations, spreading misery and destruction and undermining development efforts. The scope and the importance of this scourge call for mobilization and support from the international community in dealing with it.

In this context, Cameroon welcomes the progress made in the struggle for the eradication of anti-personnel landmines. At the second meeting of the States parties to the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on Their Destruction that was held in Geneva from 11 to 15 September 2000, the States welcomed the considerable decrease in the production of these woeful weapons, the decrease in the sales of mines and the increase in the destruction of the stocks of those mines.

Despite this commendable progress, anti-personnel landmines continue to kill and to maim innocent victims every day. Therefore, it is imperative that the impetus generated by the Ottawa process should not weaken, an impetus the result of which has been to mobilize the world community in the struggle against those weapons. The movement towards the universalization of the Ottawa Convention must be sped up.

I am glad to be able to assure the States parties that the procedure of ratification by Cameroon of the Convention in question will soon by concluded. My country calls on the generosity of donors to support the action against mines and assistance for the victims.

The scope of the destruction and the number of the victims caused by small arms and light weapons justify that the struggle against these phenomena should be in the forefront of the efforts of the international community.

The Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects to be held in 2001 should, in the view of my delegation, make it possible to move forward and strengthen the efforts of the international community aimed at preventing, fighting against and eradicating trafficking in small arms and light weapons.

Cameroon welcomes the convening of the conference, about which we are very hopeful, especially if it leads to a programme of action that would contain binding international rules for the urgent and drastic reduction in the excessive and destabilizing accumulation of small arms and light weapons throughout the world and their tragic consequences.

My country intends to play an active role in the 2001 conference and the preparatory process for it.

In this context, I would like to welcome the praiseworthy efforts of Ambassador Carlos Dos Santos, the Chairman of the Preparatory Committee, and to renew our expression of fraternal support to him.

My country supports Switzerland's offer to host this conference in Geneva and welcomes the proposals made by the Swiss Government with a view to promote the widest possible participation in this conference.

Located as it is in Central Africa — a region that is well-known for having been devastated for too many years by incessant armed conflicts — my country, Cameroon, attaches particular significance to the phenomenon of the proliferation of small arms and light weapons. This proliferation is stimulated by the many kinds of trafficking that are inspired by the armed conflicts and the resultant instability, and it is facilitated by the porosity of the borders [lack of border controls]. This proliferation is one of the major threats to the peace, stability and development of the countries of the region.

Concerned to find ways and means of fighting this scourge, these countries, under the auspices of the Standing Advisory Committee on Security Questions in Central Africa, held, from 25 to 27 at N'Djamena, a subregional conference on the proliferation and illicit flows of small arms and light weapons in Central Africa. This conference brought together high-level military and civilian staff of the subregion, who were joined by high-level experts from many parts of the world. The causes and consequences of the proliferation of small arms were examined, and national and subregional measures to fight this scourge were proposed. Some of these measures have already begun to be implemented. International-community assistance is this regard would be welcome and would

certainly contribute to promoting peace, stability and economic recovery in the countries of the subregion.

In this context, the Cameroon would like to thank the Secretary-General for his significant support for the efforts to promote peace, disarmament and development in Africa through the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Africa in Lomé. We also thank him for the persistent efforts that have been made in Central Africa in particular under the auspices of the Standing Advisory Committee on Security Questions in Central Africa. Established in 1992 by the Secretary-General in implementation of a General Assembly resolution, this Committee daily proves itself to be a valuable tool for promoting peace, security and development in the subregion and as one of the primary mechanisms for promoting joint action and confidence-building among the Central African countries. In addition to organizing the subregional conference on the proliferation of small arms and light weapons, the Committee, in Yaoundé in 1998, held a seminar on the implementation of the recommendations contained in the Secretary-General's report on security in Africa. And, more recently, at Bujumbura the Committee held a subregional conference on the issues of refugees and displaced persons in Central Africa.

Furthermore, under the aegis of the Committee, the member States of the subregion have reached a non-aggression pact and a mutual assistance pact. They have created a mechanism for the prevention, management and resolution of conflicts: the Council for Peace and Security in Central Africa (COPAX). Also under discussion is the creation of a Central African multinational force that would set up to intervene in the disturbances and conflicts that are breaking out throughout the region.

In order to be fully and truly successful, the efforts of the Central African countries to escape the cycle of violence, insecurity and poverty in which they have been caught for many years must be provided resolute and consistent support by the international community.

The peoples of the subregion, like those of Africa as a whole, aspire to peace. They want peace. They are begging us for peace. It is up to all of us, therefore, to work tirelessly to build the future free from fear, violence and poverty which these peoples are calling for with all their hearts.

Mr. Vohidov (Uzbekistan) (*spoke in Russian*): Allow me at the outset congratulate you, Sir, and all the members of the Bureau on your election to these highly responsible posts. I would also like to express my firm conviction that given your rich diplomatic experience and under your able leadership our Committee will carry out fruitful work and will achieve the positive results sought by all.

The current session of the First Committee is taking place in the context of enhanced international-community attention to questions of how to ensure international peace and security. One of the fundamental elements of this effort involves sustaining the disarmament process and making further progress with it. The work of the First Committee is also taking place in the framework of the Millennium Assembly and in the light of the recent historic Millennium Summit, and thus this work is both important and promising.

At the Summit the heads of State and Government confirmed their support for advancing the process of disarmament and non-proliferation. They confirmed the need for close international cooperation in the efforts to attain this noble objective. We must not let this opportunity pass or lose the momentum created by the recent Review Conference of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) — which, despite the negative forecasts for it, ended on a very positive and hopeful note.

Thanks to the general desire and the constructive atmosphere of the Conference, which was nourished by the able leadership of the Chairman of the Conference, Mr. Abdallah Baali, it was possible to overcome the differences of opinion and bring the Conference to a successful conclusion. The final document of the Conference set the priorities for the continuation of disarmament process, and elaborated high standards for measuring progress towards the established objective: the complete elimination of nuclear weapons from our world.

Uzbekistan has always been and remains a firm proponent of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. Our country was one of the first to sign and ratify one of the fundamental documents in this field: the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT). However, the fact that four years after this document was opened to signature, this Treaty still has not entered into force concerns us greatly.

Taking this into account, one of our principal tasks today must be to secure the universality of this important document. The international community must make a greater effort in order to attain this priority task.

Uzbekistan is today impatiently awaiting the conclusion of the report of the Ad Hoc Group on a protocol to the Biological Weapons Convention, which will make it possible to strengthen even more the importance of the Convention and considerably to enhance its practical significance. The protocol will represent a major contribution to the preparation of the Review Conference of this Convention.

The international Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects next year will be a significant event in the history of the process of disarmament. It can be stated without exaggeration that success in its work and whether we will be able to build a reliable ban on the illicit trafficking and dissemination of light weapons is something on which the lives of millions of peaceful people depends. The nefarious and daily consequences of the use and illicit trafficking in light weapons appear in many corners of the globe where the fire of military conflicts still burn.

This is borne out by the conflict in Afghanistan which has now lasted for more than twenty years and has led to hundreds of thousands of dead and wounded and millions of people left without roofs over their heads and forced to leave their homes. In emphasizing the importance of this problem it can be pointed out that one of the fundamental prerequisites for the attainment of a political settlement in Afghanistan is putting an end to outside support, including the illicit supplying of light and other weapons.

In this connection, Uzbekistan awaits positive results from the 2001 Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects.

It is quite obvious that in the existing circumstances of globalization when the world is indivisible and closely interrelated, there can be no comprehensive international security without the security of regions and individual States. We believe that the principle of globalism is, and will remain, one of the fundamental criteria in the process of disarmament and non-proliferation.

I wish to stress, once again, that Uzbekistan supports the stricter implementation by all States of the international regime of nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament and is convinced that, without this, strategic stability either at the global or at the regional level cannot be attained.

However, side by side with the principle of globalism in the disarmament process the importance of regional factors becomes evident — factors which can considerably contribute to, but also stand in the way of, strengthening the overall regime of nuclear non-proliferation disarmament.

In this context, it is necessary to stress that the initiative of countries in the nuclear-weapon-free zones is a major contribution to strengthening the regime of non-proliferation and disarmament. We welcome the progress achieved in the existing nuclear-weapon-free zones — Tlatelolco, Raratongo, Pelindaba and Bangkok Treaties; all States that are parties to those agreements and are thereby making an important contribution to the process of supporting international peace and security.

In this connection, we must point to the significance of implementing the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in Central Asia. All the States of Central Asia are working actively to ensure its realization. We highly appreciate the efforts of the Secretary-General, the Department for Disarmament Affairs headed by Under-Secretary-General Mr. Jayantha Dhanapala and also the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Asia and the Pacific region in supporting the current process for the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone and, in particular, the work of the regional expert group, which is working on completing the draft agreement for a nuclear-weapon-free zone in Central Asia.

May I also thank the Government of Japan for its assistance in the work to reach agreement on a draft treaty on the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone. Throughout its activity, the expert group has achieved major success in moving towards agreement on the text. This progress is reflected in the Final Document of the 2000 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) held last May.

May I also take this opportunity to thank, once again, all delegations whose statements contained

warm words of support for our initiative, the creation of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in Central Asia.

The disarmament process today is going through a period that is not simple. While much has been done, much more remains to be done. The international community must show the political will and make all efforts for the attainment of the noble objectives of securing stable peace and security. Uzbekistan, for its part, is ready actively to participate in the realization of the efforts of the international community for the solution of this difficult, but vitally important task.

Mr. Tekle (Eritrea): Allow me to extend to you, Sir, and the other members of the Bureau warm congratulations on a well-deserved election. I am confident that the Committee will be able to successfully complete its task under your wise and able leadership. I assure you and the members of the Bureau of my delegation's full support.

I also wish to seize this opportunity to express sincere appreciation to your predecessor, Ambassador Raimundo Gonzalez, for his able leadership and successful guidance of the Committee during the fifty-fourth session. Permit me also to thank Under-Secretary-General Mr. Jayantha Dhanapala for his insightful remarks.

The Committee is deliberating disarmament and international security issues in the wake of the Millennium Summit and the various other important conferences sponsored by the United Nations to commemorate the Millennium. The Millennium Declaration and the Secretary-General's Millennium Report, as well as the documents issued by the "We the Peoples Millennium Forum", the "World Peace Summit of Religious and Spiritual Leaders" and the "Conference of Presiding Officers of National Parliaments", had one basic message: this millennium must be a millennium of peace and progress and in order to ensure that peace and to spare this and future generations from the scourge of mass destruction, genocide, famine, deprivation, deportation and other acts of barbarism, there is a need to destroy weapons of mass destruction and to strengthen the rule of law.

The declarations of each of the Summit Conferences, as well as the insightful Millennium Report of Secretary-General Kofi Annan have come out with an unambiguous message regarding the urgent necessity to create the requisite conditions and legal norms that will guarantee humanity's march of peace and progress in the new millennium free from war or the fear of war. This collective commitment also recognizes the abiding need for, and a demonstration of the benefits of, a meaningful and durable partnership between governments, civil society and multilateral organizations. This is very encouraging.

On the other hand, the calamities that have befallen States, even after the end of the cold war, remain etched on the collective conscience of the world. It is difficult to ignore the recent threat of nuclear and other weapons of mass destruction; the escalation of nuclear competition and the lack of progress in negotiating issues at the Conference on Disarmament; the massive compiling of conventional weapons and the illicit trade in small arms; the proliferation of inter-State and intra-State, as well as regional, conflicts; the brutalities committed by Governments against their own populations, as well as those of neighbouring States, including genocide and mass murder, ethnic cleansing, incarceration, torture, rape and kidnapping; the deliberate targeting of civilian populations, including women, children and the elderly; and the terrorizing and brutalizing of populations in occupied territories. These have become sources of pain, despair, anxiety and sorrow for humanity and pose great challenges to the international community.

In this connection, it is to be noted that the destruction caused by small, medium and light weapons has posed an even more immediate threat to international peace and security and to the integrity and stability of nations than that posed by weapons of mass destruction.

While conflicts have caused much damage in other parts of the world, they have been truly devastating in Africa. Instead of the peace dividend expected after the end of the cold war, the security and stability of many African States has been undermined or gravely tested by an array of internal and external factors. These problems have led to the implosion or near implosion of States, the destruction of the socio-economic infrastructure, economic stagnation or even regression, famine and war. They has caused the loss of hundreds of thousands, indeed millions, of lives and the violation of human rights and humanitarian laws.

Among the most sordid of those violations is the use of civilians as human shields and/or mine sweepers. The natural resources of countries, including

precious minerals and cash crops, have been diverted to finance the purchase of weapons and to hire mercenaries for the destructive immoral actions of Governments against their own people or against the people of neighbouring countries. Improbable as it may seem, even assistance received from the international community for the victims of famine has been diverted to sustain these conflicts.

Having suffered from the devastating effects of the destruction caused by a 30-year liberation struggle, Eritrea appreciates the value of peace. Accordingly, it has been alive to its responsibilities to promote regional peace since it achieved independence in 1993. Thus, it had actively participated in the endeavour to change the Inter-Governmental Authority on Development (IGAD) from a small organization focused on the struggle against drought into a vibrant political organization with a mandate to deal with the peace and security issues of the region. Through IGAD, as well as on a bilateral basis, Eritrea has engaged itself in a noble mission to bring peace to the region, especially to Somalia and Sudan. Even before its independence, it engaged in peacemaking in Ethiopia not long after the overthrow of the Mengistu regime. Eritrea has also actively participated in peacemaking in the Great Lakes region.

Eritrea is still committed to the promotion and safeguarding of peace and security in our region and the rest of Africa if only because it fully realizes that its own security, stability and development are predicated on the peace, security and stability of the region and Africa.

Eritrea fully endorses, and is guided by, the recommendations on disarmament and international security embodied in the Durban Declaration for the New Millennium of the Twelfth Summit Conference of the Heads of State and Government of the Non-Aligned Movement. We note with satisfaction that Secretary-General Kofi Annan identifies the twin problems of nuclear weapons and the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons as the urgent priorities of the United Nations. We join those delegations that have urged greater effort to eliminate those threats.

The Eritrean delegation shares the concern expressed by many regarding the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons. These deadly weapons are nowadays technologically sophisticated, as recent experience has revealed, and their use often requires the importation of foreign technicians. An additional concern must therefore be the hiring of mercenaries, usually through criminal organizations, in blatant violation of the numerous resolutions and decisions issued by regional and international organizations.

During the past decade, 90 per cent of all conflicts have been fought with small arms and light weapons. These weapons have been responsible for 90 per cent of the casualties in all conflicts. Of these, 80 per cent were women, children and the elderly. Additionally, the sophistication of the weapons has enabled mercenaries to criminally engage in the deliberate, wilful and indiscriminate slaughter of innocent civilians and the destruction of socio-economic infrastructure and livestock at the behest of their employers. In fact, reports have indicated that civilian casualties are now more numerous than military casualties.

It is thus obvious that urgent international action must be taken to eliminate the indiscriminate use of small arms and the barbarity of the mercenaries. To this end, the Second Review Conference of the Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons Which May Be Deemed to Be Excessively Injurious or to Have Indiscriminate Effects must ensure the adoption of a widely accepted agreement that will prohibit and/or restrict the use of such weapons.

Yet, this will not be enough. The Eritrean delegation is of the view that it is not only the importing State that bears responsibility. The country that is exporting, or allows the direct or indirect export of, such weapons and the recruitment of mercenaries in its territory must also be held accountable, both morally and legally. On the other hand, Eritrea recognizes that a Government is duty-bound to defend the territorial integrity of its State and the well-being of its population, as affirmed in Article 51 of the United Nations Charter. To this end, Eritrea supports the ongoing effort to establish the rule of law relative to conventional arms and hopes that the forthcoming United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects will consider the issue in earnest.

Having been the victims of anti-personnel mines planted by the forces of colonial Powers, Eritreans are aware of the grief and suffering caused by the irresponsible and indiscriminate use of these evil

weapons. This being so, my delegation recognizes as a major success of the last century the entry into force of the Ottawa Convention. On the other hand, Eritrea has been constrained by its present security concerns. The Horn of Africa is a volatile region that has not experienced real peace for the past half century. Throughout the years, and long before Eritrean independence, mines have been used indiscriminately and irresponsibly. Even States that have signed the Convention have not ceased to violate it routinely. They have been endangering — and continue to endanger — the lives of Eritreans.

The international community must thus understand the predicament faced by Eritrea and other small but strategically located States in dangerous neighbourhoods. There must also be a legal mechanism that will ensure the compliance of rogue States or enable the United Nations to impose sanctions on them if they continue to contemptuously violate the Convention, threatening their smaller neighbours and endangering the lives and livelihood of their own citizens and the citizens of other States.

The Eritrean delegation has raised only some of the most urgent issues related to disarmament and international security. I seize this opportunity to inform you that we shall continue to participate in the deliberations of this Committee on this and other matters.

Mr. Issacharoff (Israel): I would like, on behalf of the Israeli delegation, to congratulate you, Sir, on the assumption of your position as Chairman of this important international body. This Committee is indeed charged with issues that are critical to the security and welfare of nations. In our region of the world, these notions have great resonance and relevance at this time and we hope that this body, under your able and professional guidance, will enrich our deliberations and fortify potential areas of agreement. My delegation will be happy to cooperate with you fully in this endeavour. We also extend our congratulations to the other members of the Bureau.

Allow me at the outset to state in no uncertain terms that peace remains Israel's overriding strategic objective. While we cannot ignore the security risks and threats inherent in the consolidation of peace and other dangers that are beginning to cast an ever growing shadow over the area as a whole, Israel views peace as the vital component of any regional stability in our area.

Successive Israeli Governments have sought to advance peace and contend with a wide array of threats to Israel's security emanating from various adversaries on different levels, some of which might remain even after the resolution of the Arab-Israeli conflict. The relationship between the quest for peace and the need for security has assumed a complexity in our region well beyond the straightforward assumption that in an era of greater peace, there should be fewer security concerns. We are now facing major challenges to the peace process itself and we must find a way to overcome these obstacles.

The Israeli-Palestinian track is now having to contend with the essence of the conflict and sensitive questions that have so far defied resolution. I hope that the Palestinians will not continue to turn their backs on the peace process. On the Syrian track, Prime Minister Barak put on the table far-reaching proposals, which unfortunately were rejected in Geneva earlier this year. In addition, the Government of Israel fulfilled in June its undertaking to remove troops of the Israel Defence Force from South Lebanon in complete accordance with Security Council resolution 425 (1978). Israel has always been a partner in any effort to forward genuine peace.

The relationship between peace and security is also critical in view of the existing and evolving threats to the Middle East, particularly from Iraq and, in a different fashion, from Iran. These countries are not engaged in, and in fact actively oppose, any compromise or resolution of the Arab-Israeli conflict. These two countries through their own acts and declarations, constitute a significant threat to Israel and to other countries in the area. In this context, with regard to Iran, I would like to state that Israel has no dispute with the Iranian people and seeks no conflict with the Iranian Government. We cannot, however, fail to be worried by the overt hostility Iran projects towards Israel and its recent long-range missile tests.

The threat of weapons of mass destruction and long-range missiles is not theoretical and these capabilities have actually been used in our area. Israel itself was targeted by Iraqi missiles in the Gulf War and this sobering experience remains fresh in our minds. The international community would also be well advised to consider current Libyan activities in the

missile area. Other examples regarding the use of chemical weapons in the Middle East are, sadly, a matter of historical record.

Israel is profoundly concerned about the present situation with regard to Iraq and the lack of any monitoring and inspection mechanism in that country for the last two years. Saddam Hussein has not changed and he continues to constitute a real threat to his neighbours and the region. The United Nations bears a critical responsibility to the countries of the Middle East to ensure that Iraq is disarmed of all its weapons of mass destruction and missile capabilities in accordance with the relevant Security Council resolutions.

During the next decade, certain countries in the area could significantly expand their existing weapons of mass destruction and long-range missile capabilities as they have done in recent years. They could also acquire capabilities that will threaten areas well beyond the Middle East, such as Europe and South Asia. These threats continue to expand in gravity, range and scope.

One the essential challenges, therefore, remains in finding the right balance between the security implications inherent in a comprehensive peace and to maintain overall security in a wider regional context.

The Middle East is undergoing change in a more distinct way than the dramatic change in the European continent over the last decade.

In Europe the term "cold war" has been consigned to history, and the notion of a major conventional conflict or a nuclear exchange between East and West has receded significantly. Generally speaking, the lines in Europe are being fashioned more by cooperation than confrontation and Europeans can therefore feel that much safer and that much more secure.

I would note that even in times of tension, prior to the end of the cold war, the major Powers sought to lessen tensions through the creation of confidence-building measures. Subsequently, even when the tension subsided, both East and West maintained their strategic deterrent capabilities.

In the Middle East the picture is different. Notwithstanding much progress in the peace process over the last decade, the region has developed, instead of a cold war, the notion of a cold peace. What should be normalization between peoples, as a vital security component and a dynamic vehicle for cooperation, has itself become a matter of contention. The multilateral working groups established after the Madrid Peace Conference have not continued their valuable work aimed at fostering and encouraging modest confidence-building measures and regional cooperation.

Unfortunately, the level of rhetoric against Israel in certain parts of the Middle Eastern media has not decreased, and this too directly impacts and reinforces Israeli threat perceptions. We believe the Middle East should learn from the valuable experience of Europe in using confidence-building measures as a vital instrument in lessening tensions between peoples in their quest for peace and security.

People in Israel on a personal level do not necessarily feel safer or more secure. In fact, over the last two decades we have witnessed the growing trend of directing the conflict to our population centres, away from the conventional battlefield.

Added to this, other countries in the area are no less conscious than Israel of the threats emanating from Iraq and Iran. Various countries in the region have also sought to improve their conventional capabilities to counter these threats. They have the means to acquire state-of-the-art equipment and here again the levels of sophisticated armaments have increased significantly over the last decade. Armies in the region have not become smaller or less threatening.

These factors, while not necessarily connected to Israel, have an impact on the nature of our security environment and increase the risk factors we will have to take into account in the future.

All this leads to the central and disturbing conclusion that over the next decade current trends indicate that countries in the Middle East could come to possess greater quantities of sophisticated conventional armaments, chemical, biological and nuclear capabilities and long-range missiles. It could well be the worst of all worlds and most definitely not the new Middle East we hoped for.

I would like to stress the following points:

First, Israel will remain committed to the peace process and will do its utmost to bring about a permanent, comprehensive and durable solution of the Arab-Israeli conflict.

Naturally, we will seek adequate security safeguards to cope with risk factors and threats within the process itself and beyond the present circle of negotiations.

Secondly, the longer range threats to Israel and to other countries in the area, as a whole, could become more profound and existential.

Thirdly, preventing Iraq from reconstituting its weapons of mass destruction and missile capabilities and from presenting a threat to the countries in the region will remain a critical factor in regional efforts to reduce arms levels in the area as a whole and, possibly, to moderate Iran's military aspirations.

Fourthly, we hope that Iran will modify its ongoing plans to develop and procure weapons of mass destruction and missile capabilities that will continue to be dependent on external assistance.

It is with these basic considerations in mind that Israel has had to forge its policy on regional security and arms control. I will try now to outline our approach in the context of this broader regional perspective.

Israel attaches primary importance to regional arrangements that could provide an answer to questions regarding security and stability in the Middle East. At the same time, this approach has not prevented Israel from supporting the efforts of the international community in curbing the proliferation of conventional and non-conventional weapons and, where appropriate, from endorsing global arrangements that do not impair Israel's vital security margins and could complement those required at the regional level.

Over the years, Israel has consistently supported the principle of non-proliferation and has never adopted a policy against the NPT regime. Israel believes, however, that the Treaty cannot be a substitute for a regional arrangement in the Middle East, where wars, armed conflicts, political hostility and non-recognition are still prevalent. These political realities in our area mandate a practical step-by-step approach, bearing in mind the ultimate goal of achieving a comprehensive peace between all the States of the region.

Accordingly, Israel supports the eventual establishment of the Middle East as a zone free of weapons of mass destruction and ballistic missiles, through arrangements freely negotiated by the regional parties and emanating from, and encompassing all the States in the region. Indeed, for the last 20 years, Israel has been part of the consensus in the First Committee regarding the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East, and we hope that this consensus will be preserved.

In addition, we note that the agenda item entitled "The Risk of Nuclear Proliferation in the Middle East" is still on our agenda, reflecting a transparent political attempt to single out Israel in an amplified way. Resolutions on this item have diverted attention from the very real and pressing proliferation problems in our area. The item ignores the ongoing problem of Iraq and the continuing efforts of Iran in the nuclear and missile areas. In short, we believe that such an agenda item has no place in an objective and professional body, which should engage in more constructive confidence-building measures so deeply needed in our area.

We also believe that this body, before taking action on this item, should also bear in mind the other concrete steps Israel has taken in the arms control area in recent years. The Foreign Minister of Israel signed the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT) in New York on 25 September 1996. This was an important and significant expression of Israel's commitment to the principle of the Treaty. Currently, Israel is one of the most active States in the Preparatory Commission of the CTBT in Vienna, seeking to bring about conditions that will enable Israel to ratify the convention.

In addition, Israel signed the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) in 1993 and is committed to its objectives. We note with concern that certain Arab countries have not signed or ratified this Convention, particularly bearing in mind that such weapons have been used more than once in our area.

I would like now to refer to conventional weapons. Israel believes that the spread of such weapons continues to be one of the acute primary day-to-day threats to security and stability in many areas of the world, and no less so in the Middle East. Accordingly, Israel has participated in the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms over the last years. We believe that a significantly wider participation of our Arab neighbours in the United Nations Register would serve to enhance mutual confidence and underline the continued importance of focusing attention on the dangers of conventional weaponry.

Israel also shares the concern of the international community regarding the indiscriminate use of anti-personnel landmines, but, in view of its security situation, is unable to subscribe to a total ban on their use. Nevertheless, Israel ratified the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW) in 1995 and recently ratified that Convention's Amended Protocol II and Protocol IV. On the issue of landmines, Israel has maintained a moratorium on the export of anti-personnel landmines since 1994, which it intends to continue indefinitely. We remain willing to contribute to an agreement banning the transfer of all anti-personnel landmines and have ceased the production of such mines. Israel continues to take an active part in humanitarian programmes designed to enhance mine awareness and the rehabilitation of landmine victims.

The illicit trafficking in small arms and light weapons, which impacts on the safety of civilians both in internal and international conflicts, is another issue that merits special attention. For its part, Israel supports the initiatives designed to curb the illicit circulation of such arms and will participate fully in those efforts. Israel hopes that the United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, to be held in 2001, will create the necessary basis for substantive progress in this area.

Finally, Israel has remained an adherent to the Missile Technology Control Regime and has supported efforts of the international community to prevent proliferation in conventional and non-conventional areas through the Nuclear Suppliers Group (NSG), the Australia Group and the Wassenaar Arrangement. We regard with concern efforts by certain countries to weaken these regimes.

These are the concrete steps Israel has taken. We are eager to see our neighbours take similar steps that would also reassure Israel and the international community as to their intentions.

Ultimately, as we consider the present and look to the future, we must as nations begin to forge a wider and more profound consensus as to how we can widen the circle of peace, enhance stability and foster greater regional and international cooperation. We have seen over the last century wars in which untold millions have lost their lives and during which humankind, at times, lost its humanity. This must not happen again. It was said in another context and in another time that there can be no substitute for victory. In truth, there can be no substitute for peace, and peace will be the only victory.

Mr. Lelong (Haiti) *(spoke in French)*: First of all, on behalf of the Haitian delegation, allow me to congratulate you warmly on your assumption of the chairmanship of the First Committee. I want to make it a point to assure you of my delegation's fullest support and cooperation in the exercise of your important responsibility.

In the arena of disarmament, some progress, slow though it may have been, has been achieved these last years through the adoption of practical measures, particularly in the area of transparency and verification, pertaining to the elimination of certain categories of arms. No one can deny that the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT) and the Convention on Biological Weapons and Toxins (BWC) remain to date the best instruments available to us to ensure global stability.

It is clear that the nuclear States must bring their full weight to bear and commit themselves unequivocally to the process of the total elimination of arsenals, even if no precise date has been fixed to that end.

In order to illustrate the imminent danger of living in a world armed with so-called deterrent devices, I would quote the words spoken by Mr. Iccho Itoh, Mayor of Nagasaki, at the NPT Review Conference on 3 May 2000 regarding the fallout of the atomic bombs dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki. He said:

> "More than 210,000 people were either killed instantly or died of injuries during the ensuing months. The vast majority of these people were not soldiers but non-combatant citizens. Dropped from an altitude of about 9,000 meters, the atomic bombs exploded 500 meters above the ground, causing a heat flash of several thousand degrees centigrade, showering the cities below with deadly radiation, and crushing and burning everything under the tremendous force of the blast. Even today, 55 years later, about 300,000 atomic bomb survivors in Hiroshima and Nagasaki continue to live in fear of death and to suffer delayed effects."

Should not the horrendous effects of those catastrophes of 6 and 9 August 1945 have been enough in and of themselves to serve as a catalyst for raising the consciousness of the leaders of peoples to abandon these nuclear devices immediately after the disasters? And yet, far from proceeding to the destruction of these weapons, the nuclear Powers now have bombs that are 2,500 times more powerful than that which pulverized Hiroshima. In other words, the world is far more at risk today than it was 55 years ago, which should compel us in all good conscience to rid ourselves once and for all of these fearsome devices. Moreover, does not the survival of our planet, the common heritage of humanity, depend on it?

It is in this context that my delegation welcomed with satisfaction the remarkable outcome of the 2000 NPT Review Conference. The nuclear-weapon States finally agreed at that forum that the total elimination of their nuclear arsenals offered the sole absolute guarantee against resort to those weapons. My delegation welcomes the fact that the nuclear-weapon States have finally decided to abandon their doctrine of deterrence to move the process forward. That theory long served as the framework for these States' preserving their military superiority, even to the extent of turning their nuclear weapons into instruments of blackmail.

Whatever happens, we must guard against euphoria and see to it that the commitments undertaken by the States parties do not remain mere rhetoric. We must see to it that they lead to concrete action. All too often — and I say this with regret — we place more emphasis on spectacle than on substance, substantially neglecting the implementation of the programme of action set in train by that process.

The decisions taken at the NPT Review Conference, the entry into force on 29 April 1997 of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction and the adoption of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-personnel Mines and on Their Destruction were encouraging signs in the context of efforts on behalf of disarmament. We share the view of Secretary-General Kofi Annan that the nuclear-weapon States should seek nuclear disarmament more assiduously. As to the 1972 Treaty between the United States of America and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics on the Limitation of Anti-Ballistic Missile Systems (ABM Treaty), my delegation was delighted by the 1 September decision of United States President Bill Clinton to defer deployment of his country's national missile defence system.

We welcome the ongoing work to establish nuclear-weapon-free zones, which contributes to international peace and security. We therefore encourage the five States of Central Asia to pursue their dialogue with the nuclear-weapon States on the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in their region.

While welcoming with satisfaction the progress made in disarmament, the Haitian delegation is concerned at the number of victims of anti-personnel landmines. The Ottawa Convention on eliminating anti-personnel landmines, which entered into force in March 1999, has been ratified by 107 countries and signed by 139, representing three quarters of the countries of the world. However, among the 56 States that have not signed the Convention, several have large stockpiles of these weapons. Two hundred fifty million of these lethal devices remain in the arsenals of 105 countries and have claimed new victims in 71 countries since March 1999. Among the 101 States parties, no violation has been identified of the Convention's key interdictions against the use and production of and trade in these mines. Over 22 million anti-personnel landmines have been destroyed by 50 countries — 10 million since March 1999. Twenty-one States parties have destroyed their stocks entirely.

While it is noteworthy that a major decline has been registered in the use and production of and transfer in mines, much remains to be done towards the total elimination of these devices. That is why my delegation stresses the need to implement fully and rapidly the provisions of the Ottawa Convention defining obligations to provide information and to set timetables for the destruction of mines. We urge the States that have not yet acceded to the Ottawa Convention to do so, and we feel that the United Nations must play a key role in that process. We take this opportunity to welcome the European Union's work in demining and victim assistance.

The excessive proliferation of small arms and light weapons represents a danger to the world. There is no need to recall the ravages caused by the use of these weapons or their impact on sustainable development. The illicit traffic in these light weapons

destabilizes States and threatens the security of populations. This traffic knows no national or regional bounds. Various, mostly domestic conflicts are fuelled by light weapons, which are easy to transport and best suited to such conflicts. They can be acquired at laughable prices and are prized by terrorists and armed gangs in major urban centres. According to experts in this field, over 35 million people in some 20 countries are the victims in one way or another of domestic conflict. The devastating effects of these weapons have political, social and economic repercussions. It is therefore necessary and urgent to assess the scope of this phenomenon and to seek solutions to the scourge. In this respect, my delegation fully endorses the declaration issued on 9 October by Jamaica on behalf of the Caribbean Community, of which Haiti is a member.

My delegation remains convinced that this issue is best addressed through a coordinated and comprehensive approach at the world, regional and national levels. We welcome with satisfaction the decision of the General Assembly, embodied in its resolution 53/77 E, in which it decided to convene an international conference on the illicit arms trade in all its aspects no later than 2001.

On this subject, my delegation congratulates the brotherly Republic of Niger, which, on 25 September, lit the "flame of peace" by destroying more than 1,000 destructive small weapons. We also take this opportunity to applaud steps undertaken by other countries in this domain in recent years.

As Mr. Dhanapala, the Under-Secretary-General for Disarmament Affairs, stressed last May,

> "Over a decade has passed since the end of the cold war. The opportunity of charting a new international order of collective and cooperative security has not been seized ... We are now at a critical stage in international affairs."

In the face of such a major challenge, we must strive to ensure that the ABM Treaty is preserved and that such treaties as Pelindaba, the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty and START II and its Protocol enter into force as soon as possible. We must also encourage the resumption of negotiations in the Conference on Disarmament on a fissile material cut-off treaty. Moreover, as to the three nuclear-weapon States whose installations have not been placed under the International Atomic Energy Agency safeguards system, every effort must be made to make sure they also become parties to the NPT one day.

We have made progress, but a great deal remains for us to do. If we expect to build a world free from nuclear, chemical or biological weapons, we, the Member States, must show increased political determination.

My delegation thus urgently appeals to all countries to exhibit genuine multilateralism in which transparency and law prevail. Only then will the vision voiced by the heads of State and Government in the Millennium Declaration will become a reality and the exorbitant sums now invested in the possible destruction of our planet will instead be devoted to building a better world — a world in which our Governments will at last work together for real security. The world will then be focused on the socio-economic growth of nations and the development of a culture of peace, starting in childhood, among all peoples.

It is with this vision of peace in mind that I would like before I close to cry out in anguish against the escalation of violence that is currently raging in one of the most sensitive parts of our planet. And I would like to emphasize the need and the urgency of again taking the road of dialogue and of negotiation.

Mr. Amar (Morocco) (*spoke in French*): Allow me first, on behalf of my delegation and on my own behalf, to congratulate you, Sir, on your accession to the chairmanship of the First Committee of the General Assembly. Confident of your human and professional qualities and of your in-depth knowledge of disarmament and international-security issues, my delegation is certain that you will guide our work to the successful outcome we all await.

The Sixth Review Conference of the States Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) held in New York was able, though not without difficulty, to adopt by consensus a final document that encapsulated the views and objectives of the States parties to this Treaty. This Conference will likely prove to have been an event of major importance given that it was the first Review Conference after the 1995 Conference, which indefinitely extended the NPT. The minimalist approach would have it that the NPT has largely done what it has to do and is of unquestionable value to the maintenance of international peace and stability. The

maximalist approach continues to deny that the NPT has led to any progress in the fields of disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation. Between these two, one could take an objective and realistic view that the Sixth NPT Review Conference, in spite of the lacunae and omissions of which it could be accused, has been able to take clearly positive positions as regards both practical disarmament measures to be undertaken by the nuclear-weapon States and the question of the Middle East.

In effect, the Conference agreed for the first time to cite Israel for being the only State in the region that was not a party to the NPT, and it appealed to Israel to accede to this Treaty and to submit all its nuclear installations to the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) safeguards system. If Israel hears it, the appeal could contribute to buttressing regional peace and security and to the implementation of the decision to create a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the region. Morocco hopes the international community will bring to bear the necessary pressure so that this appeal is heard and responded to actively.

Morocco regrets that notwithstanding the positive results of the NPT Review Conference, the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva has not managed to reach agreement on a programme of work on nuclear disarmament. Furthermore, my delegation strongly supports the proposal made by Mr. Kofi Annan to convene an international conference to study the means of eliminating the nuclear threat, and we reiterate the need to hold a fourth special session of the General Assembly on disarmament.

It has also been proposed to hold in 2001 a United Nations conference on illicit trafficking in small arms and light weapons, the objective of which would be to bring about a partnership and cooperation among States, international organizations and non-governmental organizations so as to arrive at solutions to the problems posed by the proliferation of such weapons. In this regard Morocco firmly believes in the need to fight against this phenomenon of illicit trafficking in small arms. We are of the view that — above and beyond the official decisions that will be adopted at it — the conference's success in fighting the illicit trafficking in these types of weapons will be judged by the results of the implementation of those decisions.

Morocco is delighted to see in various States increasing manifestations of political will to fight against the proliferation of small arms. We remain particularly concerned about the excessive stockpiling of conventional weapons in certain parts of the world, especially in Africa. We are of the view that such a phenomenon is not only the root cause of the loss of hundreds of thousands of human lives, it also has a direct and major impact on socio-economic development in Africa. Morocco appeals to the international community, and in particular to the countries that are producing light weapons, to launch and sustain a joint international effort to better respond to the challenges posed by the illicit trafficking in these weapons.

In this regard, the 2001 conference should look into elaborating measures for strengthening the regulation of small-arms transfer and for increasing transparency in this arena. At the same time it should call for increased cooperation in the implementation of both national and regional plans and programmes to collect and destroy these weapons.

As regards transparency in armaments, Morocco is of the view that such a policy must apply to all types of weapons and related technologies — including weapons of mass destruction. Security is not indivisible and it is important that there be transparency in these latter weapons as well as in conventional weapons. The scope of the Register of Conventional Arms must be expanded so that it also covers military budgets, national weapons production, the existing stocks and weapons of mass destruction.

My delegation takes this opportunity to reaffirm Morocco's abiding commitment to the principles and objectives of disarmament, a commitment that has often manifested itself in our signing various treaties and conventions involving disarmament and international security. Specifically, our country has always been dedicated to contributing to international and regional efforts to maintain peace and security, whenever we have been asked. At the international level, there are many examples of our commitment. At the regional level, we have always chosen the path of peace in settling disputes and have always defended and supported initiatives based on international law — as has been the case with the issue of the so-called Western Sahara.

One delegation raised this issue in its statement before our Committee, although this issue is an exclusive prerogative of the Security Council. However, this allows me to clarify the situation regarding this question. To wit, the question of the so-called Western Sahara involves the realization of the territorial integrity of Morocco. This question reached its conclusion in the wake of the Advisory Opinion of the International Court of Justice and of the Madrid Accords. However, in response to an appeal from certain allies, committed to transparency and wishing to show good faith, Morocco proposed holding a fair and equitable referendum. And since then Morocco has not ceased to cooperate unreservedly with the United Nations to ensure the completion of the process, with respect for the right to vote of all the Saharan people — without any discrimination.

At the Berlin meeting, held just a few days ago under the aegis of Mr. Baker, Morocco — although its good faith and good will were the target of machinations that sought to distort both the spirit and the letter of the referendum and its implementation — voiced its readiness to engage with the other side in a sincere and frank dialogue about this dispute, which has raged for nearly 25 years now. This proposal was hailed as being likely to help overcome the numerous obstacles currently impeding the process for resolving this issue.

Thus the President of the Council of Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the European Union did not fail, at the beginning of this week, to support the Kingdom of Morocco's proposal, in the conviction that the current impasse can be surmounted only through open and frank dialogue, dealing with all aspects of the conflict, between the parties concerned.

The Chairman: I shall now call on those representatives who wish to make statements in exercise of the right of reply.

May I remind members that, in accordance with decision 34/401 of the General Assembly, statements in the exercise of the right of reply are limited to two interventions. The first intervention is limited to 10 minutes and the second to five minutes.

Mr. Yamaguchi (Japan): The representative of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, in his statement of 9 October, made some references to Japan's foreign and defence policies. With the Committee's indulgence, my delegation would like to set the record straight by accepting the invitation extended by the representative of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

In his statement, he noted that Japan should clarify its position on giving up its attempt at nuclear armament. My job today is easy, because it is evident to all that there simply is no truth to the allegation that Japan is trying to become a military power with nuclear armaments. It is true that Japan as a nation pays due attention to its ability to defend itself. Are there any countries that do not?

The important aspect of Japan's effort at self-defence is that it has consistently adhered to its fundamental policy orientation not to become a military power that could pose a military threat to others. This policy orientation has been implemented and maintained through the limitation of its military capability to one of an exclusively defensive nature, with the underpinning of its intrinsically peace-oriented Constitution.

The representative of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea referred to Japan's attempt at nuclear armament. There is no such attempt on Japan's part, nor are there any reasons for such an attempt, which would only destabilize the international environment around Japan and be detrimental to its policy objective of maintaining peace and prosperity in Japan and beyond.

In view of the widely shared and fiercely uncompromising anti-nuclear-weapon sentiments of Japan's population, it would be the wildest fantasy to even hint at the possibility of our truly democratic country going nuclear.

If this reasoning is not enough to convince the representative of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, I would like to point out the plain facts and let these facts tell the truth.

First, Japan has stated publicly that it would stick to the three non-nuclear-weapon principles of not having, not manufacturing and not introducing into its territory nuclear weapons. It has abided by, and will abide by, these principles.

Secondly, in the legal arena, Japan's domestic legislation strictly limits its nuclear-related activities to peaceful purposes.

Thirdly, Japan is a State party to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), and its obligations under the Treaty are being complied with and verified through the complete application of the International Atomic Energy Agency's (IAEA) full-scope safeguards measures. Japan, by the way, was the first to ratify the additional protocol with the IAEA.

Fourthly, Japan is active in trying to promote realistic, step-by-step nuclear disarmament measures in the world, in the belief that the tragedies of Hiroshima and Nagasaki should not be repeated.

As our Prime Minister stated during the general debate last month, my delegation will submit a draft resolution entitled "A path to the total elimination of nuclear weapons". I would like to request all delegations, including the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, to support it.

I must confess that my delegation owes the delegation of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea this invaluable opportunity to explain Japan's position on nuclear weapons, which it would not have been able to take advantage of otherwise.

Mr. Baeidi Nejad (Islamic Republic of Iran): The representative of Israel, a country which does not respect in any way the principles of peace, security and disarmament, as enshrined in the various documents of the international community in the form of treaties and guidelines, made baseless accusations in his statement today.

First, the nature of the statement by Israel is a reflection of the legitimacy problem that it faces in the region. Surprisingly, in his statement the Israeli representative on numerous occasions accused my country of striving to develop weapons of mass destruction. There is a famous proverb stating that those who live in glass houses should not throw stones. Let us look at the record. Israel is not a party to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and has not placed its facilities under the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) safeguards, but operates secret nuclear programmes, especially in Demona, which is a matter of deep concern to the international community.

The 2000 NPT Conference, held some months ago, called on Israel by name to accede to the NPT, which is in itself a manifestation of the recognition of such a threat in the region. It also urged all States to push this regime to accede to such an important Treaty. Nor has Israel joined and ratified the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC) or the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC), which accordingly gives rise to serious questions as to the commitment of this regime to banning weapons of mass destruction.

Israel has also developed long-range missiles and fighters — up to 5,000 kilometres — which are able to carry weapons of mass destruction. I do not need to refer to the record of my country, which, as a party to the NPT, has placed all of its facilities under IAEA safeguards, is a party to the BWC and the CWC, and, beginning last year, has submitted a draft resolution on missiles, which makes clear our concern about the development of missiles in the region.

Delegations in this room today were waiting and expecting to hear the representative of Israel express his regrets concerning the criminal activities perpetrated and the measures taken by that regime in the occupied territories. Innocent Palestinians have been killed in the streets by the most brutal means, such as armed helicopters and tanks.

It is very surprising that the representatives of this regime, which has failed even to condemn the provocations or to express its regret at the killing of innocent people, is inviting the countries of the region to join in the promotion of confidence.

Let me reaffirm that the only lasting solution for the deep problem in the Middle East is to grant the people of Palestine their inherent rights, as stipulated by the many resolutions adopted by the United Nations, the Non-Aligned Movement and the Organization of the Islamic Conference.

Mr. Mekdad (Syrian Arab Republic) *(spoke in Arabic)*: The delegation of the Syrian Arab Republic wishes to exercise its right of reply to the claims that were put forward by the Israeli delegation.

At the outset, I would like to affirm that the Israeli delegation told everything except the truth. It is a well-known fact that peace is closely linked to truth, since truth is the basis on which bridges of peace and justice may be built. Indeed, what is most irritating in the Israeli statement is its insistence on distorting and reversing the facts. We believe that this is "the truth" of the Israeli strategy.

The Israeli delegation speaks of peace while the entire world is witnessing the Israeli mode of achieving

peace. The Israeli way is to kill innocent people and to dispatch its army to kill anything alive and moving. The Israeli delegation speaks of peace and disarmament, while Israeli missiles and tanks are killing everything in their way, including women, children and old people among the Palestinians and other Arabs in other regions of the world.

In the course of two weeks, approximately 115 martyrs have fallen. By all standards, this is a massacre perpetrated against an unarmed and defenceless people and against children who are suffering from Israeli oppression. They have nothing to defend themselves with except stones and their own bodies. Where is peace with the Palestinians when defenceless people are being killed and the headquarters of the leadership is being destroyed?

It is surprising that the Israeli delegation speaks of Israel's full endorsement of every international effort concerning small arms, landmines and missiles, while those very weapons are being used now for destruction and for the killing of innocent people. The level of untruth in the Israeli statement reached a point where the speaker said that Syria did not accept offers and proposals for peace at the Geneva meeting. The fact is that Israel did not make any offers or proposals at the Geneva meeting; the only proposal made was for Syria to give up its territory, its regional waters, its land, its sovereignty and its dignity. That was the Israeli proposal. Is there a single delegation in this room, apart from the Israeli delegation, willing to accept an offer of that kind?

As for the other lie, it is that the Israeli delegate said that there are other countries in the region that manufacture weapons of mass destruction and missiles and other weapons included in the list we are dealing with in this Committee. Everyone knows that Israel started the arms race in the region and that it is armed to the teeth with conventional, nuclear and chemical weapons and with mines. Israeli scientists have declared that Israel has more than 300 nuclear bombs that can be borne by missiles and aircraft and burn up the entire region.

Israeli logic in itself is aggressive. Their pretext of false security allows them to do whatever has been banned internationally. In fact, the ones who need security are the Arabs. Arab territories are occupied and Arab civilians are being murdered. The Arabs are the ones who do not have the weapons to defend themselves.

Another untruth on the part of the Israeli delegation is their claim that they fully agree with the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). The entire world knows — as has been said at past NPT Review Conferences — that Israel is the only party that has refused to place its nuclear establishments under the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) safeguards.

We can speak at length, but I will conclude by saying that peace in the Middle East will not be achieved through arsenals of weapons, or through the threat to use them against others, or through the imposition of Israeli conditions on Arabs. I wish to affirm that Syria has made a strategic choice for a just and lasting peace that can only be achieved by Israel's total withdrawal from the occupied Arab territories to the 4 June 1967 line, the implementation of the resolutions of international legality, resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973), the principle of land for peace and the terms of reference of the Madrid Conference.

Mr. Issacharoff (Israel): I will attempt to reply to the statements made by the representatives of Iran and Syria, respectively. First of all, to the Iranian delegate, I would like to state in no uncertain terms that Israel has no problem with its legitimacy, either in the area or beyond it. Secondly, in my statement I recorded Israel's concerns regarding Iran's programmes in the weapons of mass destruction and missile areas, and with very good reason. Senior Iranian leaders, including President Khatami, have continued recently — even in the last few days — to call for the destruction of Israel, and President Khatami is supposed to be among the moderate leaders of that country. Various other officials in Iran have repeatedly stated that the Shehab-3 missile is designed to hit Israel. Therefore, I frankly cannot see why he has any problem with my being concerned about these facts.

Regarding the peace process, I would suggest very strongly that he try to let us and the Palestinians come to terms with the problems that we have. They are too serious to make rhetoric out of them. We have tried to move the peace process forward in a very serious and determined way. We have done so for more than 20 years. I would like to say, with regard to the Iranian record on the peace process, that trying to undermine and weaken the peace process and encourage terrorist attacks against those who seek

peace has not brought very much honour to that country. So if the Iranian representative thinks I should apologize for Israel's being concerned about Iran's activities, I am afraid that I might have to spoil his weekend.

The Syrian representative referred to the truth about the meeting in Geneva. I think I am pretty well up to date, and I know that my Prime Minister submitted very far-reaching proposals for peace with Syria — proposals that have gone very far in trying to relate to the Golan Heights problem and in seeking a wider peace with Syria. Whether these proposals were rejected in the meeting with President Clinton in five or seven minutes by the late President Assad is something I do not know, but they were rejected all the same. Regarding the truth, I wonder, when we have had such far-reaching proposals on peace, whether the rejection of such proposals does not, in fact, indicate that, in the Syrian mind, peace with Israel still remains unacceptable. While I am comforted that they have said, today and on other occasions, that they seek to make a strategic peace with Israel, I would very much like to see how this receives expression in everyday life.

Regarding the events in the territories over recent days, I think it is not appropriate for the Syrians to lecture us and dramatize these events. As I said earlier, I think they are too serious. They have to be addressed in a serious way. Israel did not start those riots; we do not seek them and we have no interest in their continuation. As for massacres, I will reserve my position on the Syrian record in that regard.

Mr. Mekdad (Syrian Arab Republic) *(spoke in Arabic)*: I apologize for using so much precious time — yours, Mr. Chairman, and that of the Committee. It is well known that the Syrian Arab Republic has, indeed, made peace a strategic option. That is a fact. Syria has endeavoured from the beginning of the peace process to the present to achieve a comprehensive and just peace in the region, and I just explained the basis on which such a peace can be established. I am surprised by what I heard from the Israeli representative, who spoke of the proposals made at the Geneva meeting. He says that he does not know everything about those proposals. The proposals did not mention the total withdrawal of Israel from the occupied Arab territories to the line of 4 June 1967. It seems that the Israeli representative is not aware of the policies and practices of his Government in this respect.

It is clear that Israel is not willing or ready to achieve that peace, and what is taking place at the moment bears witness to that. No world event justifies the perpetration of such massacres by Israel. The Israeli representative knows that his Government has to date killed more than 115 Palestinians. These are true massacres, perpetrated against a defenceless and unarmed people. The international community has condemned these massacres. The problem is that we hear much about peace, but we do not see any real measures to achieve such a peace in the territories, on either the Palestinian or Syrian tracks.

As I said, and I would like to affirm this once more before this Committee, the Syrian Arab Republic is totally committed to the internationally binding resolutions of Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973), which Israel is trying to disregard, to say nothing of Israel's attempt to humiliate and oppress the Arabs through its current acts in the Palestinian territories. When the Arabs reject such a peace — the Israeli peace — they are bombed, destroyed and killed. Is that peace?

The Chairman: Some delegations have asked to exercise their right of reply for a second time. Because of the lateness of the hour, we will hear them in the afternoon. We will then proceed with our thematic discussion.

We have concluded the first phase of our work, namely, the general debate. In accordance with the adopted programme of work, starting this afternoon, the Committee will begin its second phase of work, namely, the thematic discussion on item subjects as well as the introduction and consideration of all draft resolutions submitted under agenda items 65 to 81. As an easy reference for delegations, document A/C.1/55/CRP.2, containing subjects for thematic discussion, was distributed yesterday. In order to organize these meetings in an orderly manner, delegations are requested to kindly inscribe their names on the list of speakers for the specific meetings, if they are ready.

Before adjourning the meeting, I should like to inform the members of the Committee that the informal consultations on small arms scheduled for this afternoon have been cancelled. Another consultative meeting on small arms, originally scheduled for 16 October, has also been postponed until a later date.

The meeting rose at 1.20 p.m.

United Nations A/C.1/55/PV.14

General Assembly

Fifty-fifth session

Official Records

First Committee

14th meeting

Friday, 13 October 2000, 3 p.m.

New York

Chairman: U Mya Than (Myanmar)

The meeting was called to order at 3.15 p.m.

Agenda items 65 to 81 *(continued)*

General debate on all disarmament and international security items

The Chairman: First of all, we will hear statements by any delegation wishing to exercise the right of reply.

I now give the floor to the representative of Israel to exercise the right of reply for the second time.

Mr. Issacharoff (Israel): I will not take up very much of the Committee's valuable time. I just want to make some very brief comments regarding the statement made this morning by the Syrian delegation.

First of all, I am very well informed of my Government's policies and I know what proposals were made to President Al-Assad by President Clinton at Geneva. Those proposals were far-reaching and designed to reach peace with Syria. The fact that they were rejected by Syria is a matter of public record, so I am not sure what the Syrian representative is arguing with me about.

Secondly, if the Syrian representative really said that they have a strategic decision for peace, I would definitely urge him to make peace with Israel. We *always* respond eagerly to such offers.

The last point is with regard to the incidents in the territories. I really do think that the Syrians should let the Palestinians speak for themselves. I have no trouble talking about those events, but I am not sure that this is the right time and place. But I do find it particularly objectionable to receive lectures from the Syrian representative on those issues the day after three of our soldiers were so brutally murdered at Ramallah. I think there are times when silence would, at the very least, be of better service to the Syrians.

Thematic discussion on item subjects; introduction and consideration of all draft resolutions submitted under all disarmament and international security items

The Chairman: As I mentioned this morning, in accordance with the programme of work that has been adopted, this afternoon the Committee will begin the second phase of its work, namely, a thematic discussion on item subjects, as well as the introduction and consideration of all draft resolutions submitted under agenda items 65 to 81. For the ease of reference of delegations, document A/C.1/55/CRP.2, which contains subjects for thematic discussion, has already been distributed. In this context, I should like to encourage delegations to make reference, wherever appropriate, to the Millennium Declaration, to the proposals of the Secretary-General and to other proposals made at the Millennium Summit meetings of the General Assembly.

As we have done in previous sessions in accordance with the decision made on the rationalization of the work of the Committee, the programme will be rather flexible during this phase of the Committee's work. In other words, the Committee's

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00-68802 (E)

work will continue the discussion of specific subjects and take up the introduction or consideration of all draft resolutions so that sufficient time will be allowed for informal consultations and discussions on draft resolutions. In order to organize the forthcoming meetings, I should like to suggest that, as far as possible, delegations inscribe their names on the list of speakers for specific meetings.

I should like to open the floor this afternoon for the thematic discussion or for the introduction of any draft resolution.

In the meantime, I should like to inform the Committee that, in connection with the medium-term plan, we have planned the discussion of that plan to take place on 17 October. I wish to draw the Committee's attention to the relevant documents, namely, A/C.1/55/CRP.3, A/C.1/55/6 and A/C.1/55/16/Part 1. Those are the supplementary documents being circulated for the benefit of delegations with regard to the medium-term plan.

The floor is open for the thematic discussion. Any delegation wishing to take the floor to express its views on any of the subjects may do so.

Does any delegation wish to take the floor at this stage? That does not appear to be the case.

We have completed the general debate. This morning we had a very long and intensive discussion. So I believe that, today being Friday and given the prolonged meeting this morning, representatives deserve a short meeting this afternoon. If no delegation wants, or is prepared, to take the floor at this stage, I intend to adjourn the meeting. I hope that in the coming week delegations will be prepared to introduce draft resolutions, express their views on the subjects and participate in the thematic discussion with vigour.

Before adjourning the meeting, as I announced at this morning's meeting, the consultations on small arms scheduled for 4 p.m. this afternoon have been cancelled.

The three documents I mentioned earlier will be distributed to the members of the Committee immediately.

The meeting rose at 3.25 p.m.

United Nations A/C.1/55/PV.15

General Assembly
Fifty-fifth session

Official Records

First Committee
15th meeting
Monday, 16 October 2000, 3 p.m.
New York

Chairman: U Mya Than (Myanmar)

The meeting was called to order at 3.15 p.m.

Agenda items 65 to 81 *(continued)*

Thematic discussion on item subjects; introduction and consideration of all draft resolutions submitted under all disarmament and international security items

Mr. Paturej (Poland): Since I am taking the floor for the first time at this session of the First Committee, I wish to congratulate you, Sir, on your assumption of the chairmanship of the Committee.

On behalf of Canada and Poland, I wish to introduce draft resolution A/C.1/55/L.18, entitled "Implementation of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction".

The main purposes of this draft remain the same as in previous years, namely to confirm the determination of the world community to achieve the effective prohibition of the development, production, acquisition, transfer, stockpiling and use of chemical weapons and their destruction, and to support the ongoing work of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons in The Hague to implement the Chemical Weapons Convention. The draft therefore raises the most important issues relating to the achievement of the main objectives of the Convention.

The draft emphasizes the necessity of universal adherence to the Convention and calls upon all States that have not yet done so to become parties to the Convention without delay.

It notes with appreciation the ongoing work of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons to achieve the objectives and purposes of the Convention. It stresses the importance of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons in verifying compliance with the provisions of the Convention as well as promoting the timely and efficient accomplishment of all its objectives.

The draft also stresses the vital importance of full and effective implementation of, and compliance with, all provisions of the Convention, and it urges all States parties to the Convention to meet in full and on time their obligations under the Convention and to support the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons in its implementation activities.

The draft stresses the importance to the Convention that all possessors of chemical weapons, chemical weapons production facilities or chemical weapons development facilities, including previously declared possessor States, should be among the States parties to the Convention, and welcomes progress to that end.

In the draft, we welcome the cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons and the signature of the Relationship Agreement between the United Nations and the Organization, in accordance with the provisions of the Convention. We also propose to include in the provisional agenda of the fifty-sixth

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00-69234 (E)

session the item entitled "Implementation of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction".

The draft resolution does not raise, consider or assess any issues concerning the implementation of the provisions of the Convention. There is a broad consensus among delegations in the First Committee that issues related to the implementation of the Chemical Weapons Convention will be discussed in their entirety at The Hague, at the headquarters of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons.

It is with great pleasure that I can inform the Committee that this draft resolution received the appreciation and support of all of the delegations that participated in the intensive preparatory work carried out in recent days.

Delegations also expressed their understanding and support for the draft and for the established practice of having the draft resolution on the implementation of the Chemical Weapons Convention introduced by Canada and Poland.

The work accomplished confirmed the full support and determination of all delegations to achieve the effective prohibition of the development, production, acquisition, transfer, stockpiling and use of chemical weapons and their destruction. The ongoing work of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons in The Hague to implement the Chemical Weapons Convention was also noted and fully supported.

I should like to emphasize the very good atmosphere and the openness and support prevailing among the members of the First Committee during the consultations. This businesslike atmosphere and the positive attitude of all delegations created a sound basis for the adoption without a vote of this draft resolution on "Implementation of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction".

The desire for cooperation and mutual understanding and the search for a consensus have remained the main objectives of Canadian and Polish endeavours in the process of working on this draft resolution.

I wish, on behalf of Canada and Poland, to thank all the delegations that participated in the consultations for their understanding and valuable input and for the support expressed during our common work. That positive atmosphere and the support expressed for the chemical weapons ban and for the work of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons, as well as the valuable input and ideas of delegations, are all elements I will bring back to The Hague.

I wish to stress that the support of the members of the First Committee and of the United Nations creates an important positive incentive for continuing our efforts to implement all of the provisions of the Chemical Weapons Convention and to move forward towards a world free of chemical weapons.

Finally, I wish to thank the delegation of Canada for its continued support and valuable cooperation in the process of the work on this draft resolution.

Mr. Lee (Republic of Korea): My delegation extends its appreciation to the representative of Poland for introducing the draft resolution before the Committee. This draft is well focused in its emphasis on the role of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) in achieving the objectives and purposes of the Convention. At the same time, it addresses the issues of universality and compliance in a forward-looking way.

The Chemical Weapons Convention has a unique status among multilateral disarmament treaties, and seeks to ban an entire category of weapons of mass destruction. We believe that its successful implementation will result in the total elimination of chemical weapons around the world, and eventually contribute to achieving the ultimate goal of freeing the world from other weapons of mass destruction. My delegation therefore supports this important draft resolution and hopes that it will be adopted by consensus, as it was last year.

Mr. Baali (Algeria): My delegation has asked for the floor to introduce draft resolution A/C.1/55/L.7 on the 2000 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT).

The Review Conference was the first since the Treaty was extended indefinitely in 1995. Following a preparatory process that commenced in April 1997, 158 States parties met in April and May this year for the

purpose of reviewing the operation of the Treaty, taking into account the decisions and the resolution adopted by the 1995 Review and Extension Conference.

The outcome of the 2000 NPT Conference is widely known. The States parties to the NPT reached a full consensus on a Final Document presenting their deliberations on the Treaty's past and future — the first time they had done so in 15 years and the third time in the history of the NPT review process. They managed to evaluate the results of the period since 1995, including the implementation by States parties of their obligations under the Treaty, and to identify areas in which, and the means through which, further progress will be sought in the future, including strengthening the implementation of the provisions of the Treaty and the achievement of its universality.

The balanced review of the implementation of the Treaty's provisions since the Treaty's indefinite extension in 1995 and the agreement on realistic and practical steps to further advance the process of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation and to strengthen cooperation in the peaceful application of nuclear energy, as well as the agreement on improving the effectiveness of the strengthened review process for the Treaty, are, indeed, remarkable achievements.

Considering that the political environment was far from auspicious for a successful Review Conference, owing to the absence of meaningful nuclear disarmament during the period following the Treaty's indefinite extension in 1995, the outcome of the Conference was a hard-won success that exceeded everyone's expectations.

Having had the honour and the privilege to preside over the 2000 Review Conference, I thought it appropriate that at its fifty-fifth session the General Assembly should welcome the results of the Conference jointly arrived at by the States parties to the Treaty. The intention of my delegation was, therefore, to present a procedural draft resolution that would allow the General Assembly to welcome the Final Document of the Conference, which was adopted by consensus. In presenting the draft resolution, I am also following past practice.

My delegation has consulted widely on the draft resolution, and I would like to thank all delegations for the cooperation extended to us. I should also like to state for the record that many delegations expressed their desire to join in sponsoring the draft resolution but they graciously stood aside to permit my delegation to hold the consultations and finalize the draft resolution. I appreciate their cooperation and wish to express my sincere thanks to all of them.

The draft resolution is a short one, containing only one operative paragraph. In adopting the draft resolution, the General Assembly would welcome the adoption by consensus on 19 May 2000 of the Final Document of the 2000 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, including in particular the documents in Volume I, Part I, entitled "Review of the operation of the Treaty, taking into account the decisions and the resolution adopted by the 1995 NPT Review and Extension Conference" and "Improving the effectiveness of the strengthened review process for the Treaty".

I would like to stress that, following past practice, the draft resolution before the members of the Committee this year does not contain any reference to the preparatory process for the next review conference, which is to commence in 2002. This will be the subject of a resolution at the fifty-sixth session of the General Assembly, following consultations among the States parties to the Treaty.

My delegation is very well aware of the fact that among us there are States that are not parties to the Treaty. Notwithstanding their position, my delegation hopes that those States will permit the draft resolution to be adopted without a vote. However, if there is a request for a vote, my delegation earnestly requests the States parties to the Treaty, who represent the overwhelming majority of the international community, to vote in favour of the draft resolution.

Mr. Hu Xiaodi (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): I should like to make a statement to express my views on nuclear disarmament. With regard to international security, there has recently been a series of negative developments that have given rise to concerns among peace-loving people about the prospects for nuclear disarmament. Although the decision to deploy a national missile defence system has been delayed, that plan has not been abandoned and is still being pushed ahead. The Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty, which has for many years underpinned the international strategic balance and stability, is in danger of being undermined. If this happens, the necessary basis for achieving

nuclear disarmament will no longer exist, the sense of insecurity and distrust among States will be increased and the process of disarmament will stagnate and may even be reversed, leading to a new global arms race.

The Final Document adopted by consensus at the 2000 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) contains a summary of the situation regarding nuclear disarmament, non-proliferation and the peaceful uses of nuclear energy since the 1995 Review Conference, and sets out the programme of action in those areas for the next five years so as to serve as positive guide for the promotion of our work in the future.

During the recent NPT Review Conference, the five nuclear-weapon States issued a joint statement in which they elaborated a common denominator position in the areas of nuclear disarmament, non-proliferation and the peaceful uses of nuclear energy. They also undertook not to target their national nuclear weapons against any other State. This was one of the most important factors contributing to the Conference's success.

In order to attain the goal of the creation of a nuclear-weapon-free world at an early date in the new century, we must overcome the negative factors and ensure that nuclear disarmament move forward in the right direction. In this connection, the Chinese delegation believes that it is vitally important that all States strive to observe the following principles and specific steps: first, the countries with the largest nuclear arsenals should shoulder their special and prime responsibility for nuclear disarmament; they should significantly and irreversibly reduce their respective nuclear arsenals. Countries with deployed nuclear weapons should withdraw all their nuclear weapons back to their own territory. The policies and practices of the nuclear umbrella and nuclear sharing should be abolished.

Secondly, all nuclear-weapon States should unequivocally and unconditionally undertake not to be the first to use nuclear weapons and not to use or threaten to use nuclear weapons against non-nuclear-weapon States or nuclear-weapon-free zones. They should conclude a legally binding international legal instrument to that effect.

Thirdly, the promotion of measures relating to nuclear disarmament can not succeed unless international strategic stability is ensured. What is most important now, in that regard, is that the ABM Treaty be strictly observed. The countries concerned must comply with this Treaty and other legal instruments until arms control and disarmament have been reached. In that connection they must refrain from research and development and the deployment of a nuclear defence system that undermines global strategic balance and stability and from helping other countries to obtain such a system. They should not interfere in the internal affairs of other countries by spreading advanced anti-ballistic systems and technology and undermining other countries' sovereignty and territorial integrity. The international community also needs to conclude, through negotiation, a legal instrument on the complete prohibition of an arms race in outer space and of the militarization of outer space.

Fourthly, all countries should strive to urge countries that have not joined the NPT to join it, so as to promote an early coming into force of the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT). The Conference on Disarmament, on the basis of a comprehensive and balanced programme of work, should start early negotiations for the conclusion of a multilateral, non-discriminatory and internationally verifiable treaty on the prohibition of fissile materials used for nuclear weapons. These measures are aimed at preventing the horizontal and vertical proliferation of nuclear weapons, so as to create the necessary conditions for the eventual removal of all nuclear weapons.

Fifthly, the nuclear-weapon States should, on the basis of their commitment not to be the first to use nuclear weapons, conclude a convention banning the use of nuclear weapons. History shows that the international community started first with treaties banning the use of chemical and biological weapons before entering into negotiations for the conclusion of the CWC and the BWC. By the same token, in order to completely eliminate nuclear weapons we should also start banning the use of nuclear weapons.

Sixthly, on the basis of the aforementioned five points and on the basis of the principles of maintaining international strategic stability and of ensuring that the security of all countries is undiminished, we should start negotiations for the conclusion of a convention on the complete prohibition of nuclear weapons.

China is determined to follow a course of promoting all the aforementioned norms and measures.

My delegation will also, in keeping with the position of principle, support all proposals and propositions that are conducive to the early achievement of a nuclear-weapon-free world. On this basis we will determine our position when we come to the vote on the draft resolutions on nuclear disarmament.

The Chairman: We go to the second phase of our work — namely, thematic discussion on subjects under the items on the agenda, as well as the introduction and consideration of draft resolutions — in a very flexible programme. Any delegation that so wishes may take the floor and address any subject on the list that we have submitted to the delegations.

Does any delegation wish to take the floor at this stage?

This does not appear to be the case.

The meeting rose at 3.40 p.m.